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FIRST THINGS

June/July 1990
Number Four

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

Black Dignity and the Common Good
Glenn C. Loury

Ecumenism Without Illusions: A Catholic Perspective
Avery Dulles

Law, Laws, and Human Community
Mary Ann Glendon

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JUNE/JULY 1990 • NUMBER FOUR

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Trust and Obedience

FIRST THINGS has done me the favor of asking Professor Gilbert Meilaender to review my book, *The Giving and Taking of Life: Essays Ethical* (April). May I dialogue briefly with some of his remarks?

He attends, in the first place, to my central argument: that the moral import of human actions resides in their capacity to affect the character of those who perform them. Evil acts are those which tend to make us wither; good acts are those which bring us to flourish. The Christian venue of moral inquiry and discourse, then, is the cumulative wisdom from inspired experience whereby we appraise how certain acts characteristically stunt or enhance our persons. That is: how they ready us or disenable us to cleave to God (and anyone else) in love. And though this communal judgment of believers is served by the special vocational functions of the pastor, the scholar, and the prophet, it is the *community* which makes this appraisal.

"Catholics," Professor Meilaender cautions, "think a church without a heavy-handed magisterium looks alluring; Protestants think a church with some semblance of order and authority would be positively refreshing. But the serious point is this: If there is a process of discernment that is important in the life of the church, may there not also be a time for authoritative decision? A time for participation but also a time for obedience?"

This he finds embodied in Trumpkin the dwarf in C. S. Lewis' *Prince Caspian*. Charged by his High King Peter with a mission in which he does not believe, he finally accepts. "You are my king. I know the difference between giving advice and taking orders. You've had my advice, and now it's time for orders."

Let me offer a counter-illustration. In the beginning of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* Gandalf the wizard confronts Bilbo with an injunction to yield up the Ring. He uses badgering, blandishment, and the claims of comradeship. But as Bilbo falters and is drawn into the undertow of the ring's sinister power, Gandalf commands him: "Give it up!" Bilbo pleads for time: "'I don't seem able to make up my mind.' 'Then trust mine,' said Gandalf. 'It is quite made up.'"

Gandalf presents Bilbo with a wisdom to trust, not a rule to obey. Likewise, moral authority in the church evokes trust, not obedience. The commands of moral authority are issued from intellect, not from will. It is, of course, God's will that we submit to the truth, but when humans present us with the truth they expose us to *its* imperatives, not *theirs*. They discern; they do not decide. Our church has no more order and authority than it has wisdom.

Meilaender then observes that our tradition is a historical one, subject to fluctuation, wavering, and dispute. Without an authoritative voice to define its authentic trajectory the community "will be subject to more spirits than the one termed 'Holy' by Christians. It will be shaped in large measure by the surrounding cultural context."

There are indeed times when the voice of moral authority in the church is garbled, or double-tongued, or indecisive, or negligent. There are times when the clergy can be bought, or scholars either fawn on or embalm the past, or the prophets are slain. But other times come, when the church clears her mind and throat and speaks out in ways the "cultural context" finds positively offensive. She is repeatedly startled back from her confusion and apathy by someone as unexpected as young Daniel whose solo shout in the crowd saved Susanna. The authority of the Spirit is never quite quenched. Just when it seems to have been doused it spangles up like a flare. My brother at Oberlin also doubts my claim that the moral force of actions can be seen primarily in the effect they have upon the character of the perpetrators. "I find myself unable to suppose that we learn best whether it is right or wrong to bake an infant in an oven by

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considering whether such action causes the flourishing or the withering of the one who does it." But we live in a "cultural context" where twenty-five million infants have been stifled, poisoned, and dismembered in the womb; and our moral consensus manages to conclude no more than that it is too bad, not that it is evil—more evil even for us than for the children. The children, as so often with victims, are unavailable for interview. Yet it is the sight of the destroyers, and especially the contrivance of their defense, that shows us how ill, how lethal for those who wreak it, is this carnage.

Ask yourself: have we learned more about the perversity of Apartheid from looking at the suffering of its black and "colored" victims, or from beholding the swagger and purposive blindness of those who wield the sjambok?

Professor Meilaender wants morality to be obediential: "Our souls belong to God . . . and the problem with Burtchaell's formulation is that it too readily suggests that our souls belong to ourselves—that what counts is simply our flourishing. But we flourish when we learn to be *obedient* to the will of God. . . . I am ready to affirm with him that we can flourish as moral beings only when we act virtuously . . . as long as he is willing to say much more clearly than he does that this flourishing may often be hidden entirely under the cross, visible only to faith and not to sight." That is a balance I entirely accept. It is what I meant by stressing that without the prophet who sees things from the cross and cries to us to see them too, and without the faith that seems folly, the community cannot scrutinize the hearts of humans and descry there the hidden force of human actions, for death or for life.

James Tunstead Burtchaell, C.S.C.
The University of Notre Dame

Can Custom Protect?

In "Reflections on the Flag-Burning Case" (March), Mary Ann Glendon may not have meant to do so, but she points to the dangerous shoals ahead as we let down the barriers protecting custom in favor of freedom of expression—as in flagburning. Andy Capp is quoted: "The difference between law and custom is that it takes a helluva lot more nerve to violate a custom."

All things being equal, custom will protect the flag if society disapproves of those who do not respect it and who use it as the scapegoat for personal emotional vendettas. However . . . as year after year public schools graduate classes which have had no encouragement in respecting country, custom, or core beliefs; and as colleges graduate classes which have been steeped in the vindictive outbursts of faculty dedicated to overthrowing what we view as our "society," what then will protect the symbols we have respected for generations? . . .

When "society" becomes representative of those who have systematically been imbued with the antipatriotic teachings of those whom they are required to listen to in schools, those who now revere our national emblems will then be in violation of "custom," and subject to condemnation. . . .

Will law professors then teach punishment rather than protection?

Joan Battey
Apalachin, NY

Catholics and Protestants

Thank you for your excellent and timely publication. I am sure there are many others just as I who have long wished for just such a forum.

Your premier March issue was clearly up to my expectations. However, the article that piqued my interest the most sails under false colors. Promising a Protestant view, Stanley Hauerwas delivers little more than another Catholic perspective on Roman Catholicism in modern America ("The Importance of Being Catholic: A Protestant View"). . . .

My main objection to Hauerwas' thesis is not so much his support of Catholicism, but his misrepresentation of Protestantism. Because he mistakenly equates contemporary American secularism with the reformed Protestant ethos that shaped this nation, he seems to accuse Protestants of seducing Catholics into a sort of ethical and moral anarchy. While it is true that the entrenched bureaucracies of the so-called "mainstream" churches are guilty-as-charged of secular heresies, what Hauerwas and the Catholic mind cannot grasp is that these establishment voices do not speak for the Church. A lower-case moral majority still clings to the Reformation's precious precepts which are far removed from liberation theology. The left-leaning Catholic bishops got there on their own.

All this being said, I agree wholeheartedly with Hauerwas' basic premise. I too believe that Catholics should remain Catholic, not so much for the promulgation of Roman Catholicism, but to help Protestants remain Protestant. We need desperately to provide both sides with a healthy antagonism against which we can continue to define and comprehend those doctrinal views that have put us in touch with God. . . . After all, we both recognize Jesus Christ as head of the church universal, and that is all the unity we need.

Lawrence A. Orr, Jr.
Marietta, GA

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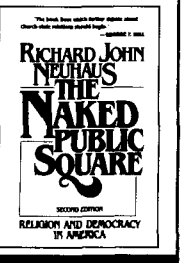

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FIRST THINGS
JUNE/JULY 1990

Post-Cold War Newspeak

A terrible linguistic confusion has set in following the Revolution of 1989, and we will likely just have to bear with it for a while. That doesn't mean it should not be challenged, but a calm and clear approach to the problem is in order.

The problem, briefly stated, is that the collapse of Communist regimes and the death of Marxist ideology have left large sectors of our political, cultural, and religious leadership at a loss as to how to think and talk about the world. Their belief system has been exploded. Over the last four decades, and especially since the 1960s, that belief system had two chief articles of faith. The first article—and there were both hard and soft versions of this—was that, all things considered, Marxist regimes and would-be regimes represented the authentic aspiration of "the people" for a more just social order. Those who subscribed to the hard version of this article of faith were quite upfront in cheerleading Communist rule in, among other places, Maoist China, Castro's Cuba, North Korea, East Germany, Grenada, Nicaragua, and even in the Soviet Union itself.

Those who subscribed to the soft version acknowledged the unpleasant aspects of such regimes, but operated on two saving provisos. First, they said that even the more oppressive Marxist regimes were in their professed ideals, if not in practice, on the right side of history; and they had, after all, made remarkable economic and social gains, even if at a terrible human price. The second and more important proviso was that Marxism and socialism must not be judged by the failures of Marxists and socialists. "True" Marxism and "true" socialism, it was incessantly asserted, have yet to be given a fair try.

The second article of faith in the belief system now exploded was shared by both the hard and soft socialists, but also by many who did not want to be pinned with the Marxist, or even the socialist, label. That article was, quite simply, that—all in all, and considering the alternatives—the United States is a negative force in world history. Many went further and said the U.S. was a force for evil, the root cause of capitalist, imperialist, militarist oppression in the world. The more temperate contented themselves with asserting that the U.S. represented the revolutions of the past ranged against the revolutions of the future. In their view, America had become, more willy-nilly than by conscious design, the bastion of political reaction and the anchor of a world economic system that was the cause of most, if not all, of the poverty, suffering, and environmental degradation in the world. Among the conclusions to be drawn from this state of affairs was that Americans were in no moral position to be "judgmental" about Communist regimes and sundry Marxist insurgencies against the "unjust status quo."

These, then, were two articles of the belief system: the conviction that socialism, more or less Marxist, held the key to a more promising future, and that America and its power in the world was the chief obstacle to the realization of that future. It is a terrible thing to have a belief system destroyed, and destroyed so unceremoniously. We are witnessing the pain that attends what Peter Berger has analyzed as "the collapse of plausibility structures." After such a collapse people are left without a place to stand, bereft of ideas with which to make sense of things, without a way to locate themselves in the continuing disputations about the shape of the world and what to do about it. People in the "knowledge class"—e.g., media pundits, politically concerned academics, the church-and-society curia—are supposed to know, they are paid to know, they have a deep career investment in what they claim to know. After the Revolution of 1989, it is embarrassingly apparent that many, probably most, members of the knowledge class did not know what they were talking about. They were wrong. Worse than being wrong, from their viewpoint, they were stupid.

There are a number of possible reactions to the trauma of plausibility collapse, all of them marked by desperation. Denial is the most common, and perhaps the most understandable. It can take the form of simply pretending that nothing has changed. Here,

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for instance, is a brand-new statement from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "The Church in Society: Toward a Lutheran Perspective." Brand-new, and depressingly old. The source of injustice in the world, we are told, is individualism and economic systems based on competitiveness. And so, self-evidently, the course of justice is communal and egalitarian restructuring of the world along the lines of "economic and social democracy." It is as though the Revolution of 1989 never happened. Most of the people responsible for statements such as this would not publicly call themselves socialists, and might be sincerely appalled at being called Marxists. They are simply locked into an antiquated belief system, operating on habitual assumptions, blithely unaware of the historical provenance of the ideas they take to be self evidently true. They have been spared the pain of knowing that their plausibility structures have collapsed. Most of them, charity compels us to say, are less devious than dumb.

Others, more swift of mind and fleet of foot, employ deception in support of denial. Here is where post-cold war Newspeak becomes more interesting. Consider, for example, Eugene Rochberg-Halton, social theorist and author of *Meaning and Modernity*, writing on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. His subject is the "cold war's victims," and the victims in question are all the people who have allegedly suffered from American militarism. The list of victims is long, and the author thinks a memorial should be erected to them. On that memorial, he suggests, should be inscribed the words uttered earlier this year by President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia: "The previous regime, armed with a proud and intolerant ideology, reduced people into the means of production. . . . Out of talented and responsible people, ingeniously husbanding their land, it made cogs of some great, monstrous, smelly machine, with an unclear purpose."

Ponder this for a moment, please. Havel's words are spoken in condemnation of the Communist regime overthrown in the Revolution of 1989. They are spoken in the context of affirming the new Czechoslovakia's determination to be part of Europe and the West, with representative democracy and a market economy. Never mind; Rochberg-Halton, clearly a victim of cold war plausibility collapse, seizes upon Havel's words and twists them into a condemnation of the Western democracies that Havel intends to praise. Here is where desperation turns into the deception of post-cold war Newspeak.

Or consider the editorial line now advanced by *Sojourners*, a magazine that advertises itself as the voice of radical evangelicalism. It has been watching the 1989 Revolution with great interest and enthusiasm, and searching for what it means for Christians in the West. What it means, according to *Sojourners*, is that the champions of democracy in the West who have been so critical of Communism in the East have been proved wrong. The evidence of that, if you will believe it, is that the Communist nations are having their revolution while our revolution still hasn't happened! Readers who shake their head in disbelief at such logical contortions fail to understand that, for this species of Christian radicalism, the struggle for justice is against the undifferentiated reality of "principalities and powers" (Ephesians 6), and the nature of the principality or power in question really does not matter. The revolutionary mandate does not allow for nice discriminations, such as that between totalitarianism and liberal democracy. In other words, Communism is better because it is so obviously bad that it leads to revolution against Communism. Liberal democracy, on the other hand, insidiously preserves the hated status quo.

Post-cold war Newspeak is evident in another way of talking that has become widespread in the last year or so. Communist hardliners are routinely referred to as "conservatives," while their anti-Communist critics are the "liberals." Thus the geriatric champions of Maoism in China, Gorbachev's opponents in the politburo, and, increasingly, Fidel Castro are "conservative." Behind this peculiar usage is an assumed alignment of moral judgment. Liberal and left are good, conservative and right are bad. Add to that the felt need to be on the side of history's winners. The conclusion is obvious: If it is turning out that those who used to be called the conservatives are winning, then it must be that they are really liberals. And vice versa.

Such Newspeak is turning our political language into an awful muddle. In this century the difference between left and right has been fairly well understood. The left emphasized economic and social rights, the right emphasized civil and political rights. The left favored state planning in a command economy, the right favored competition in a market economy. Among religious leaders, the left believed that some curtailment of religious freedom could be tolerated for the sake of other social goods, the right insisted that there is no higher good than religious freedom. There were distinctions and arguments at the edges, but that was the fairly well understood shape of the dispute. To be sure, until the 1960s, those farther to the left complained that most American liberals were really on the right, and they were right about that. But, with the "radicalization" of the last twenty years, that changed and liberalism lurched dramatically leftward. In our recent political experience, the distinction between "left" and "liberal" has become somewhat strained, but it is worth remembering that liberalism has not always meant what it is generally thought to mean today.

Perhaps the more useful distinction since the 1960s, many have argued, is the distinction between anti-Communists and anti-anti-Communists. The Revolution of 1989 in Eastern Europe is one in which the

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anti-Communists—those who give priority to civil and political rights, favor market economics, and insist on religious and cultural freedom—are carrying the day. The most elaborate exercises in post-cold war Newspeak cannot disguise for long the fact that the anti-anti-Communist left has been discredited by the very course of history to which it made its ultimate appeal for vindication. Anti-Communist critics should not gloat excessively over the discomfiture of the left. After all, it did not take much intelligence for most people to see through the moralistic pretensions of a Marxism that visited upon millions nothing but brutal madness. Moreover, the utopian impulse that drove the death march of Marxism has not come to an end. Leaving Marxism behind, that impulse will surely contrive new banners, slogans, and grand illusions with which to resume the march.

But, for now, we can be grateful for a momentary pause in the march of madness. This is the second great pause in this century, the first being the defeat of National Socialism. Unlike that horror, however, Marxism and ideas derived from Marxism supplied much of the intellectual leadership of the West with a belief system. Those who have been deprived of their belief system are in pain. It is not surprising that some of them desperately lash about with denials and deceptions, trying to cover their embarrassment. And some sympathy is in order for others who seem to be in a state of catatonic stupor, capable only of mouthing the slogans of a vanishing world. In such a situation, the emergence of post-cold war Newspeak was perhaps inevitable. It need not permanently corrupt our moral and political discourse if we remain calm and clear about why so many of the "best and the brightest" feel they need it to get through what has to be a very difficult period in their intellectual sojourn.

Opinion

Sakharov's Legacy

Holt Ruffin

At his funeral a close friend remarked: "It's been said a village cannot stand without its preacher. What now?"

Andrei Sakharov, physicist, so-called "father of the Soviet H-bomb," three-time Hero of Socialist Labor, winner of the Order of Lenin, had in fact become a sort of father to the Soviet people when he died of a heart attack in Moscow at the end of 1989. A leading campaigner for human rights, Sakharov first came to the attention of many in the West during the early seventies as the slender, stooped figure with a tonsure of white hair who stood vigil outside Soviet courthouses while closed political trials were under way inside. In his last months, now a member of the Congress of People's Deputies, Sakharov led the fight to repeal the article in the Soviet Constitution which granted a political monopoly to the Communist Party. When Russian voters went to the polls in early March 1990 to elect representatives to their parliament and local city councils, the *New York Times* reported that Sakharov's memory was like "election-day magic, with many voters invoking his name to explain the qualities they wanted in their representatives, or to praise candidates who had been associated with him."

Sakharov's death could be viewed as a delayed result of the Soviet war in Afghanistan. For having condemned the invasion publicly and called for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics, the scientist was arrested in January 1980 and sent, without trial, into internal exile in the closed city of Gorky. Here he would spend the next seven years. In May 1984, despite poor health and his own history of cardiac problems, he started a hunger strike to obtain permission for his wife, Yelena Bonner, to go abroad for medical treatment. For two years thereafter the world heard nothing of Sakharov except from official sources. Subsequently, it was learned that Sakharov had suffered a stroke and nearly died from the effects of force-feedings administered at Gorky Regional Hospital. This episode probably did further damage to his heart and hastened his death last December 14 at age 68.

In late 1986 Mikhail Gorbachev made the famous telephone call to Gorky to notify Sakharov of the end of his exile, and over the next three years the relationship between the two men would be one of respect mixed with distrust. In December 1988 Sakharov gave Gorbachev a strong endorsement when he said: "I believe that he is an outstanding and sincere man who deserves trust and support." Yet just days before his death, a more discouraged Sakharov—frustrated in his efforts to repeal Article 6—wondered whether the Soviet President was after all only "guided by tactical and unprincipled considerations."

Gorbachev for his part made no public speech of tribute to Sakharov, but he did visit his coffin at the Academy of Sciences, where he was heard to say, referring to the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize conferred on the physicist, "It is now clear that he deserved it."

Partinost, the Russian word for "party spirit," was alien to Sakharov. He was a person of permanent principles, not permanent enemies. He sought to base his positions on evidence and reason, and believed in the dignity of all men and women, whether political prisoners in Siberia or Politburo members in Moscow. An example of Andrei Dmitriyevich's intellectual courage and independence was his opinion of Gor-

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bachev. Although his support was always guarded and conditional in nature, it nevertheless provoked dismay in some quarters when the very symbol of the Soviet struggle for human rights gave a positive evaluation of the Communist Party General Secretary.

Sakharov's most important writings dealt with the threat of nuclear war and the conditions for real peace between East and West. He strongly favored arms control negotiations, but his concept of peace did not embrace unilateral disarmament, either by the Soviet or American governments. Sakharov believed there were conditions in which it could be as dangerous for nations not to have weapons as to have them. He said as recently as November 1988: "Lack of balance is very dangerous. . . . The work which we did [to develop a Soviet thermonuclear weapon] was justified." Earlier he wrote: "Balanced disarmament is extremely important; but this result cannot be achieved from a position of weakness."

In the early eighties Sakharov shocked Soviet leaders by advocating from exile in Gorky that the U.S. deploy the MX missile. He believed the nuclear balance had moved decisively in favor of the USSR in the previous decade and that the powerful MX was needed to restore equilibrium.

If Sakharov worried at times about the encouragement to Soviet aggression fostered by America's neglect of its deterrent, he also warned Americans against trying to "use the arms race to exhaust the USSR." Such a policy would not only fail to achieve the intended political and economic collapse of the USSR, but would also bring to a stop any progress the USSR might be making toward democratization and liberalization. When Sakharov visited the U.S. in 1988, he criticized our Strategic Defense Initiative on grounds that it would accelerate the comparable Soviet program, would not significantly reduce the threat of nuclear attack, and ultimately posed a threat to *perestroika*.

But supporting or opposing particular weapons systems in order to maintain the balance of power and advocating arms control measures were not the central thrusts of Sakharov's thinking on peace. To him, achieving a more open and democratic Soviet Union was the *sine qua non* for substantial East-West progress toward arms control and disarmament. "The most serious defect of a 'closed' society," he wrote in 1977 in *Alarm and Hope*,

> is the total lack of democratic control over the upper echelons of the party and government in their conduct of domestic affairs and foreign policy. The latter is especially dangerous, for here we are talking about the finger poised on the nuclear button. . . . As long as a country has no civil liberty, no freedom of information, and no independent press, then there exists no effective body of public opinion to control the conduct of the government and its functionaries. Such a situation is not just a misfortune for citizens unprotected against tyranny and lawlessness; it is a menace to international security.

Sakharov repeated these themes many times. In 1987 he stated: "The main and constant ingredient of my position [is] the idea that the preservation of peace is indissolubly linked to the openness of society and the observance of human rights."

What followed from these views for Americans? Sakharov was clear: vigorous support of the struggle for human rights and civil liberties within the USSR. This not only expressed the deepest values of our nation; it was also a practical imperative. A democratizing Soviet Union was a safer world power and more trustworthy partner in arms control agreements than a Marxist-Leninist superpower whose leaders ruled absolutely and without challenge.

Although most public leaders in the U.S. today would associate themselves unequivocally with Andrei Sakharov, the fact is that many of them ignored or rejected "the main and constant ingredient" of his thought by creating a false dichotomy between work for peace and arms control on the one hand, and work for Soviet democratization and human rights on the other. George Kennan, among many others, expressed such a dichotomy when he wrote, at the height of the nuclear freeze movement, that "a choice must be made between the interests of democratization in Russia and the interests of world peace. In the face of this choice there can be only one answer. . . . Democratization not only can but must wait; world peace cannot."

Sakharov rejected the view that democratic values had no roots in his native land, or that those living in free societies could not help those struggling under dictatorships to enlarge the realm of freedom. Nobody appreciated better than he that democracy would come to the USSR only if its own citizens demanded it, but Sakharov also believed that the attitude of the West toward the Soviet human rights movement was of critical importance to its survival and success. It was for this reason that he wrote an essay, published in the U.S. in 1975, titled "The Liberal Intelligentsia of the West: Its Illusions and Responsibilities."

In his essay Sakharov acknowledged a "respect bordering almost on envy" for his counterparts in the West and praised their "inner freedom . . . absence of national prejudices . . . and readiness to undertake good works." But he then focused on what he termed the "left-liberal faddishness" of Western intellectuals. This faddishness was responsible, in Sakharov's eyes, for the refusal of the West to take "a clear-cut position" against international aggression by the USSR and its allies, or to defend vigorously the cause of human rights in left-wing dictatorships.

What accounted for the faddishness of the West's

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"best and brightest"? The factors that seemed the most powerful were the simplest: a deep fear of seeming to be old-fashioned or out of step with youth, and a love of the novel, the radical, and ultimately, the ephemeral. Taken together with other factors, including what he called an "inadequate notion of the tragic complexity of real life" (and the effects of many years of Soviet propaganda), Sakharov feared that the shallowness of the West's intelligentsia when facing problems of East-West relations posed nothing less than "a tremendous danger to mankind."

Whether Sakharov's body of writings on East-West peace and associated issues will ever be fully appreciated in the West is uncertain. There is no doubt, however, of his contribution to the changes now sweeping the Soviet Union. "To be a real Russian," Dostoevsky said about Pushkin over a hundred years ago, "is to be universally human." Like Pushkin, Andrei Sakharov was a universal man who will be remembered abroad as much as at home. His insistence that peace is the parent, sister, and child of human rights and democracy has proven true in East-West relations. Now, as the USSR faces both nonviolent and violent challenges to its authority from within the "internal empire," one hopes that the ideas and spirit of this great son of Russia will also guide Moscow in its search for solutions to its nationalities problem.

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Ecotastrophe Again

Herbert London

The drumbeat for apocalypse can once again be heard in the media. Almost two decades after the publication of *The Limits to Growth*, the Club of Rome scenario that predicted ecological catastrophe, the Worldwatch Institute has picked up the mantle of leadership in the discredited field of what I have euphemistically called "millenarian studies."

In its annual *State of the World Report*, Worldwatch, a Washington-based research group, contends that, taken together, the current trends in population growth, excessive consumption of wood, minerals, and other materials in producing energy, the release of toxic substances in the environment, and "exponential economic expansion" are eroding the natural systems for sustaining life on earth. As one might anticipate, the proposed answer to this febrile scenario is a "new global economy."

Lester Brown, president of Worldwatch and chief author of the report, argues that we have forty years to make the necessary changes—or else. In 1972, the Club of Rome gave the world fifty years to make the changes required to avert catastrophe. Two years later it revised its estimates. One waits eagerly—though not with optimism—for Brown's recantation. "If we have not succeeded by 2030," Brown says, "environmental deterioration and economic decline will be feeding on each other, causing social structures to disintegrate."

In order to sustain global vitality, Brown insists, we need to lower population growth rates and stabilize emission of the industrial gases that, as they accumulate in the atmosphere, are affecting global climate and eliminating the forest cover. He argues predictably for an equitable (i.e., egalitarian) distribution of wealth, a global population cap at eight billion people, and a reliance on solar, thermal, and wind power. Carbon emissions must be reduced to one-eighth of current levels to ward off havoc in the atmosphere, and the private automobile must be replaced by public transportation and the bicycle. All this cannot occur, of course, without fundamental change in "the social, economic, and moral character of human societies." Above all, "individual priorities and values" must be altered, specifically in the form of a transition away from materialism.

Although these arguments have a familiar ring and find a receptive audience, most of the claims are misleading, misguided, or false. Thus, while the birthrate in East Africa *is* pressing against the limits of food supplies, that example is increasingly the exception as the rate of global population increase subsides and as food supplies increase. Even the Club of Rome conceded several years ago that the earth could sustain a population of 22 billion people with *known* food reserves, a population figure almost three times higher than Worldwatch's proposed cap.

Most of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere can be attributed to volcanic ash rather than industrial gases or automobile emissions. This suggests that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere vary according to natural rather than man-made causes. In any case, the whole notion of global warming, to which the question of carbon dioxide levels is presumably related, remains an unproven hypothesis. In fact, temperatures in the northern hemisphere over this century have actually decreased slightly.

The idea that under current world conditions the rich get richer and the poor get poorer is easily disproved by tracking per capita income levels in China and India, two nations representing half the world's population. In these two nations, per capita income has risen steadily in the last two decades. Moreover, the arrival of Pacific rim nations into the ranks of the middle class from what was formerly abject poverty is one of the extraordinary achievements of the century, apparent to everyone but Lester Brown.

Similarly, the bromides about materialism and consumption fly in the face of how people improve their standard of living and their environmental

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situation. Unless one assumes that people are simply gatherers taking from a finite earth and not restoring the natural bounty, the Brown view of environmental conditions is specious. In fact, the generation of wealth today is much less reliant on nonreplaceable resources than was ever the case before. Artificial or man-made substances are everywhere replacing natural products.

If indeed the world should run out of fossil fuel—a virtual impossibility if one includes coal and coke—then the supply and demand equation would shape the direction of energy substitution. Under present conditions, the best bet would be toward nuclear energy rather than solar energy. Nuclear technology is better developed and cheaper than the solar alternative. Brown, of course, would not even consider such a possibility.

To buttress an essentially weak argument, Brown relies heavily on the presumed moral imperatives behind his position. His argument simply assumes that it is moral to consume less rather than more, to ride a bike rather than a car, to use replaceable rather than unreplaceable resources. But as far as human well-being is concerned, that view cannot be sustained, despite its appeal to neo-Calvinistic principles. Consumption is a reflection of preference and the ability to pay for what one wants. That desire is directed to products that are the result of human ingenuity, which Julian Simon describes as the ultimate resource. Should we be at the point of running out of anything, markets and pricing provide an incentive for alternative discovery. But that isn't where we are as a people. The earth is far more fungible than the ecological Chicken Littles believe, and enterprise is far more effective in coping with strains on the environment than Lester Brown supposes.

This doesn't mean one should adopt a pollyannish view of the ecosystem. It doesn't pay to be cavalier with nature's bounty. But it also isn't sensible to exaggerate the dangers to the environment, to underestimate mankind's ingenuity, and to predict apocalypse—unless of course these predictions give you notoriety in the *New York Times* and benefactions from philanthropists. Come to think of it, Lester Brown may not be as absurd as he seems.

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Schools on Purpose

Charles L. Glenn

For each of the past twenty-one years the Gallup Organization has conducted a nationwide poll on attitudes of the American public toward education. The latest results, like others in recent years, show an apparent contradiction between strong support for more parent choice among schools, and equally strong support for some measure of uniformity among schools.

When asked whether they favored or opposed "allowing students and their parents to choose which public schools" the students would attend, 60 percent were in favor with 31 percent opposed; minority respondents favored choice by 67 percent to 22 percent, and respondents under thirty were clearly more favorable than those over fifty. On the other hand, respondents favored "requiring the public schools in this community to use a standardized national curriculum."

Support for parent choice implies acceptance that the educational goals of parents and of schools can legitimately differ, while support for a national curriculum implies a desire for even more uniformity than now exists. Perhaps the positions can be reconciled, however; indeed it may be that the push for expanded choice of schools requires that we become more clear about what all schools—if in varied ways—should seek to accomplish.

Several years ago, in the course of a discussion subsequently published as *Democracy and the Renewal of Public Education* (Eerdmans 1987), I made a prediction about the sequence of reforms that renewal would follow.

First, a growing demand on the part of parents would force school staff to abandon the myth of value-neutrality and become more purposeful about the formation of character. As schools developed the moral coherence essential to this mission, they would have to do so in varied ways because of the lack of a single perspective on moral issues among the American people.

This would in turn require more choice for both teachers and parents, since the pretense that "one size fits all" would lose its remaining rags of credibility; individuals should not be forced to teach in or to entrust children to a school with a strong and distinctive mission unless they share that vision.

As choice of schools became more universal, however, it would be essential that the society become more clear about the non-negotiable elements in education. Regulation in great detail of how and when and by whom instruction should be provided would no longer be possible, and would be replaced by broad consensus upon a core of skills and knowledge and virtues, leaving room for real diversity in how these qualities are to be developed.

Whether to allow parents to choose the schools their children will attend has since then become the hottest topic in education. Many business and political leaders have called for more choice, while education leaders (with the notable exception of Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers) remain strongly

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opposed.

Those who call for parent choice—and I should declare at once that I am one of the more active proponents among educators—believe that it will create the conditions for more effective education, as teachers are allowed and encouraged to create distinctive schools that express a clear pedagogical vision. Schools will become accountable to parents rather than to distant bureaucracies, and parents will be challenged to take more responsibility for the education of their children.

Opponents fear that expanded parent choice will lead to a splintering of society along ideological lines because of an abandonment of the "common school." Now, of course, middle-class parents have always found ways to make decisions about the education of their children, either by where they decide to live or by choosing to pay for private schooling. Middle-class parents living in cities find many ways to avoid enrolling their children in schools with a high proportion of poor and minority children. But these individual decisions have somehow not called into question the belief that the unity of our society is guaranteed by educating children of the most varied backgrounds together—and that in fact we are doing so, all evidence of racial and class segregation to the contrary.

The real issue in today's debates over parent choice of schools is whether the structure of schooling should be changed to permit and encourage all parents to make decisions, either among public schools or among all available schools, public and private. In Massachusetts, for example, we have strongly encouraged urban school systems to make parent choice the basis for enrolling students in all schools, as a means of increasing race and class integration and of stimulating improvements in schools.

The rapid expansion nationwide of programs to permit parent choice among schools has run ahead of our thinking about what all schools should teach. It will not be too difficult to reach agreement about the skills or the hard knowledge that all students should possess (although delivering results may well be more than our present structure of education can accomplish), but how do we decide about how civic virtue—some common sense of the obligations of a free society—should be developed, given our profound differences as a people and the desire to avoid imposition of a State pedagogy?

Discussion was advanced significantly by the publication in 1987 of a booklet entitled *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles* (Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers), signed by a broad spectrum of leaders and opinion-makers. "Are the ideas and institutions—and above all the worth—of democracy adequately conveyed in American schools?" asked the authors, who noted that

> any number of popular curriculum materials deprecate the open preference for liberal democratic values as "ethnocentric." One widely distributed teaching guide on human rights accords equal significance to freedom of speech, the right to vote, and the guarantee of due process on the one hand, with the "right" to take vacations on the other.

The statement concluded that the study of history is the key element in education for democracy, provided that it is taught with "active learning on the part of students—ample time for class discussions, for coaching, for frequent seminars to explore ideas, and for regular writing assignments."

What this brief statement could not fully present has now been admirably developed by historian Paul Gagnon in *Democracy's Half-told Story: What American History Textbooks Should Add.* Gagnon reviews how five textbooks used by many schools in the eleventh grade present the main themes of our history, and how they could better come to grips with the real purpose of learning history. As he comments of one, "In this long march of earnest, mind-numbing prose there is no hint of hard and costly choices, real sacrifices that underlie success, or possible failures to solve particular problems."

The authors and publishers of history textbooks must seek to satisfy state and local adoption procedures which stress the number of themes that are covered, however superficially, and the inclusion of any group that is able to make a case for its previous underrepresentation. The fear of offending any group with certified victim status makes such texts resemble mail-order catalogues rather than critical reflections on the meaning and uses of the past.

> Just as world history texts take a pious, uncritical approach to things non-Western, so these United States history texts treat women, minorities, and "ordinary people" much as Parson Weems treated George Washington. They can do no wrong. As ordinary people themselves, students know better.

Even for those with no particular interest in reform of the high school curriculum, Gagnon's comments on the lessons that may be drawn from each phase of American history will stimulate new reflection. Of the Puritans, so often abused in popular historical writing, he notes

> their yearning for a just and holy community, and their vigilance against forces that would undermine it, including their own weaknesses. . . . By failing to clarify their faith and aspirations, the texts leave the impression that they were hypocrites—or more hypocrites than we are—for wanting "freedom" for themselves but banishing

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those who questioned their theology and church authority. The texts do not explain why they believed they had compelling reason to abhor unorthodox religious doctrine as we, say, abhor unorthodox economic and political doctrines.

Thus "students are left with the impression that toleration is the only "religious" idea worth remembering. . . . Modern readers, always ready to mistake their own indifference to religion for the virtue of toleration, could profit from better perspective."

Gagnon returns again and again to the importance of seeing American history in relation to events in other nations, to similar problems solved in different ways, and to the particular advantages that America has enjoyed. In current texts "the impression is left that we have achieved all [that we have] because we have ideals that most others do not have, that our success is unconnected to historical or geographical conditions, or to hard work and sacrifice." The complacency encouraged by such a sense of American exceptionalism ill-prepares us for the challenges that lie ahead.

The most damaging weakness of the current teaching of American history, Gagnon and other critics have suggested, is its failure to come to grips with the ideas that have shaped political life. This is understandable: American political debate has almost always sought to conceal the fact of underlying differences between competing groups as to philosophy and goals; these must be inferred from the actual policies advanced. Explicit political ideology has been an uneasily tolerated foreign import, in contrast with a dominant native tradition of political pragmatism.

This refusal to entertain ideas has protected us from the worst effects of ideological hatred, but it has also left our public life defenseless against the simple conflict of material interests and the politics of personality. Attempts to articulate European-style Christian principles of political decision-making within a pluralistic system—for example, those of Jim Skillen and the Center for Public Justice—develop little resonance in the thin air of American political life. Paul Gagnon insists that "without preaching or indoctrination, texts need to demonstrate . . . that ideals and values are important."

Is this too much to ask? One hopes not; certainly, as our political campaigns take on a triviality not seen since the 1840s, it is worth the effort to stress that fundamental decisions about national life require reflection and moral choice.

Why, after all, should high school students study history at all? Gagnon reminds us that as Toqueville insisted, "citizens must exercise both morality and intelligence." It is history's virtue that it can teach us both these things by example. Democracy relies on the good sense of the people and Gagnon understands that, properly taught, "history provides the nuance and complexity necessary for sensible judgments." On education thus understood depends the health of our democracy.

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Black Dignity and the Common Good

Glenn C. Loury

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Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders, and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.
(Hebrews 12:1, NIV)

Black History Month is certainly an appropriate time to reflect upon this "great cloud of witnesses" who surround us—the spirits of all those who constitute the pantheon of American liberty and equality. These witnesses, of course, include the great figures of black American political and cultural history, but they include as well the leaders of the founding generation who conceived and gave birth to our still-maturing democracy. And they include the humble Americans whose names are not recorded in history books—the ordinary people who continued to believe in American ideals even when American political practice ignored those ideals.

For black Americans the struggle for freedom and equality is the central theme in our historical experience. This struggle, in turn, has played a key role in shaping the contemporary American social and political conscience. The trauma of slavery, the fratricide of the Civil War, the profound legal ramifications of the Reconstruction amendments, the ignoble post-Reconstruction retreat from the moral and practical implications of black citizenship, the collective redemption of the Civil Rights Movement—these have worked to make us Americans the people we are. Only the massive westward migration and the still-continuing flow of immigrants to our shores rival the history of race relations as factors defining the American character.

Beginning in the mid-1950s and culminating a decade later, the Civil Rights Movement wrought a profound change in American race relations. The civil rights revolution largely succeeded in its effort to eliminate legally enforced second-class citizenship for blacks. The legislation and court rulings to which it led effected sweeping changes in the structures of education, employment, and electoral politics. This social transformation represents a remarkable, unparalleled experience; in barely the span of a generation, and with comparatively little violence, a despised and largely disenfranchised minority descendant from chattel slaves used the courts, the legislature, the press, and the rights of petition and assembly of the republic to force a redefinition of their citizenship. One can begin to grasp the magnitude of this accomplishment by comparison with the continuing turmoil that besets those many nations around the world suffering under long-standing conflicts among racial and religious groups.

Yet, despite this success, hopes that the Movement would produce true social and economic equality between the races remain unfulfilled. No compendium of social statistics is needed to see the vast disparities in economic advantage which separate the inner-city black poor from the rest of the nation. No great talents of social observation are required to notice the continuing tension, anger, and fear that shroud our public discourse on matters concerning race. When, in 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., declared his

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"dream"—that we Americans should one day become a society where a citizen's race would be an irrelevancy, where black and white children would walk hand-in-hand, where persons would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character—this seemed to many Americans both a noble and attainable goal. Today, even after King's birth has been made an occasion for national celebration, this "dream" that race should become an irrelevancy seems naively utopian—indeed *that* dream is renounced even by those who no longer claim his mantle of leadership.

Thus, on the first national celebration of Martin Luther King Day in 1986, Jesse Jackson decried the widespread focus on King's great, unifying "I Have a Dream" speech, and stressed instead King's opposition to the Vietnam War—an opposition, be it noted, that King came to only after long agonizing with his conscience, and that he always carefully distinguished from the position of the extremists within the anti-war movement. Jackson offered his own interpretation of the 1963 speech: "That so-called 'I Have a Dream speech' . . . was not a speech about dreamers and dreaming. It was a speech describing nightmare conditions. . . . Dr. King was not assassinated for dreaming." A few days later Jackson clarified the meaning of this last comment when, to a national television audience, he stated his belief that King had been killed with the assistance of the FBI and/or the CIA.

I mention this not to disparage Rev. Jackson, but merely to indicate the bitterness that continues to characterize race relations in our country. But we must not lose sight of the vision that King placed before us; we must not allow the universal truths that he championed to be lost amidst partisan bickering. It is worth considering at greater length what Martin Luther King actually had to say about his American dream. At the 1961 commencement at Lincoln University, he put it this way:

> One of the first things we notice in this dream is an amazing universalism. It does not say some men [are created equal], but it says all men. It does not say all white men, but it says all men, which includes black men. It does not say all Gentiles, but it says all men, which includes Jews. It does not say all Protestants, but it says all men, which includes Catholics.
>
> And there is another thing we see in this dream that ultimately distinguishes democracy and our form of government from all of the totalitarian regimes that emerge in history. It says that each individual has certain basic rights that are neither conferred by nor derived from the state. To discover where they come from, it is necessary to move back behind the dim mist of eternity, for they are God-given. Very seldom, if ever, in the history of the world has a socio-political document expressed in such profoundly eloquent and unequivocal language the dignity and the worth of the human personality. The American dream reminds us that every man is heir to the legacy of worthiness.

Today black Americans, and the nation, face a challenge different in character though perhaps no less severe in degree than that which occasioned the civil rights revolution. It is the challenge of making real for all of our citizens the American dream that, as King aptly put it, "every man is heir to the legacy of worthiness." The bottom stratum of the black community has compelling problems that can no longer be blamed solely on white racism, that will not yield to protest marches or court orders, and that force us to confront fundamental failures in lower-class black urban society. This profound alienation of the ghetto poor from mainstream American life has continued to grow worse in the years since the triumphs of the civil rights movement, even as the success of that movement has provided the basis for an impressive expansion of economic and political power for the black middle class.

There is no way to minimize the social pathologies that afflict the urban underclass, just as it cannot be denied that vast new opportunities have opened for blacks to enter into the mainstream of American life. In big-city ghettos, the black youth unemployment rate often exceeds 40 percent. According to one recent study, over one-quarter of young black men in the critical age group 20 to 24 have dropped out of the economy, in the sense that they are not in school, not working, and not actively seeking work. In the inner city far more than half of all black babies are born out of wedlock. Black girls between the ages of 15 and 19 constitute the most fertile population of that age group in the industrialized world. The families which result are most often not self-supporting. The level of dependency on public assistance for basic economic survival has essentially doubled since 1964; almost one-half of all black children are supported in part by transfers from the state and federal governments. Over half of black children in public primary and secondary schools are concentrated in the nation's twelve largest central city school districts, where the quality of education is poor, and where whites constitute only about a quarter of total enrollment. Only about one black student in seven scores above the 50th percentile on standardized college admissions tests. Blacks, though little more than a tenth of the population, constitute approximately half of the imprisoned felons in the nation. Roughly 40 percent of those murdered in the U.S. are black men killed by other black men. In some big cities black women face a risk of rape that is five times as great as that faced by whites.

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These statistics depict an extent of deprivation, a degree of misery, a sense of hopelessness and despair, a fundamental alienation that is difficult for that great majority of Americans who lack direct experience with this social stratum to comprehend. They pose an enormous challenge to the leadership of our nation, and to the black leadership. Yet we seem increasingly unable to conduct a political dialogue out of which might develop a consensus about how to respond to this reality. There are two common, partisan themes that dominate the current debate. One is to blame everything on racism, to declare that the situation proves the continued existence of old-style American racial enmity, only now in a more subtle and modernized form. This is the view of many civil rights activists. From this perspective the tragedy of the urban underclass is a civil rights problem, curable by civil rights methods. Black youth unemployment represents the refusal of employers to hire competent and industrious young men because of their race. Black welfare dependency is the inescapable consequence of the absence of opportunity. Black academic underperformance reflects racial bias in the provision of public education. Black incarceration rates are the result of the bias of the police and judiciary.

The other theme, regularly expressed by those on the right in our politics, is to blame everything on the failures of "Great Society liberals," to chalk the situation up to the follies of big government and big spending, to see the problem as the legacy of a tragically misconceived welfare state. A key feature of this view is the apparent absence of any felt need to articulate a "policy" on this new race problem. It is as though those shaping the domestic agenda of the government do not see the explicitly racial character of this problem, as if they do not understand the historical experiences that link, symbolically and sociologically, the current urban underclass to our long, painful legacy of racial trauma. Their response has been to promulgate a *de facto* doctrine of "benign neglect" on the issue of continuing racial inequality. They seem to think that it is enough merely to be right about liberals having been wrong on this question.

These responses feed on each other. The civil rights leaders, repelled by the Reagan and now Bush administrations' public vision, see increased social spending as the only solution to the problem. They characterize every question raised about the cost effectiveness or appropriateness of a welfare program as evidence of a lack of concern about the black poor; they identify every affirmative action effort, whether aimed at attaining skills training for the ghetto poor or securing a fat municipal procurement contract for a black millionaire, as necessary and just recompense in light of the history of racial oppression. Conservatives, for their part, repelled by the public vision of civil rights advocates and convinced that the programs of the past have failed, prefer not to address racial issues at all; when they do, they talk in formalistic terms about the principle of "color-blind state action." Federal civil rights officials have absurdly claimed that *they* are the true heirs of Martin Luther King's moral legacy, by virtue of their having remained loyal to his "color blind" ideal—as if King's moral leadership consisted of this and nothing else. Conservative spokesmen have pointed to the "trickling down" of the benefits of economic growth as the ultimate solution to racial problems; they have at times seemed to court the support of segregationist elements; and they remain at this late date without a positive program of action aimed at narrowing the yawning chasm separating the black poor from the rest of the nation.

There is, many would now admit, merit in the conservative criticism of liberal social policy. It is clear that the Great Society approach to the problems of poor blacks has been inadequate. Intellectually honest people must now concede that it is not nearly as easy to truly help people as the big spenders would suggest. The proper measure of "caring" ought not be the size of budget expenditures on poverty programs, if the result is that the recipients remain dependent on those programs. Moreover, many Americans have become concerned about the indifference toward values and behavior that was so characteristic of the Great Society thrust, the aversion to holding persons responsible for those actions that precipitated their own dependence, the assumption that "society" is to blame for all the misfortune in the world. Characterizing the problem of the ghetto poor as a function of white racism is one variant of the "society is guilty" argument. It overlooks the extent to which values and patterns of behavior of inner-city black youths are implicated in the difficulty.

Many Americans, black and white, have become disgusted with the way in which the underclass problem is exploited for political gain by professional civil rights and poverty advocates. They have seen the minority youth unemployment rate cited in defense of special admissions programs to elite law schools. They have watched as public officials, caught in their illegal indiscretions, use the charge of racism as a cover for their personal failings of character. They have seen themselves pilloried as "racists" by civil rights lobbyists for taking the opposite side of legitimately arguable policy debates.

Yet none of this excuses (though it may help to explain) the fact that our national government has failed to engage this problem with the seriousness and energy that it requires. The government has permitted ideology to stand in the way of the formulation of practical programs that might begin to chip away at the problem. It has permitted the worthy goals of reducing taxes and limiting growth in the size of government to crowd from the domestic policy agenda the creative reflection that will obviously be needed

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to formulate a new, non-welfare-oriented approach to this problem.

Ironically, each party to this debate has helped make viable the otherwise problematic posture of the other. The lack of a positive, high-priority response from a series of Republican administrations to what is now a long-standing, continuously worsening social problem has allowed politically marginal and intellectually moribund elements to retain a credibility and force in our political life far beyond what their accomplishments would otherwise support. Many are reluctant to criticize the marginal elements because they do not wish to be identified with a Republican administration's policy on racial matters. Conversely, the shrill, vitriolic, self-serving, and obviously unfair attacks on administration officials by the civil rights lobby has drained their criticism of much of its legitimacy. The "racist" epithet, like the little boy's cry of "wolf," is a charge so often invoked that it has lost its historic moral force.

The result of this perverse symbiosis has been to impede the establishment of a political consensus sufficient to support sustained action on the country's most pressing domestic problem. Many whites, chastened by the apparent failures of 1960s-style social engineering but genuinely concerned about the tragedy unfolding in our inner cities, are reluctant to engage the issue. It seems to them a political quagmire in which one is forced to ally oneself with a civil rights establishment no longer able to command broad respect. Many blacks, on the other hand, who have begun to have doubts about the effectiveness of liberal social policy are hindered in their articulation of an alternative vision by fear of being too closely linked in the public mind with a policy of indifference to racial concerns. We must find a way to get beyond this partisan squabbling. A part of our nation is dying. And if we fail to act, that failure will haunt us for generations.

I can personally attest to the difficulties that this environment has created. I am an acknowledged critic of the civil rights leadership. There are highly partisan policy debates in which I have gladly joined on the conservative side—on federal enterprise zones, on a youth opportunity wage, on educational vouchers for low-income students, on stimulating ownership among responsible public-housing tenants, on requiring work from able-bodied welfare recipients, on dealing sternly with those who violently brutalize their neighbors. I am no enemy of right-to-work laws; I do not despise the institution of private property; I do not trust the capacity of public bureaucracies to substitute for the fruit of private initiative. I am, to my own continuing surprise, philosophically more conservative than the vast majority of my academic peers. And I love, and believe in, this democratic republic.

But I am also a black man; a product of Chicago's South Side; a veteran in spirit of the civil rights revolution. I am a partisan on behalf of the inner-city poor. I agonize at the extraordinary waste of human potential which the despair of ghetto America represents. I cannot help but lament, deeply and personally, how little progress we have made in relieving the suffering that goes on there. It is not enough, far from being enough, for me to fault liberals for much that has gone wrong. This is not, for me, a mere contest of ideologies, or a competition for electoral votes.

And it is because I see this problem as so far from solution, yet so central to my own sense of satisfaction with our public life, that I despair over our government's lack of commitment to its resolution. I believe that such a commitment, coming from the highest levels of our government, without prejudice with respect to the specific methods to be employed in addressing the issue but involving a public acknowledgment of the unacceptability of the current state of affairs, is now required. This is not a call for big spending. Nor is it an appeal for a slick public-relations campaign to show that George Bush "cares" as much as Jesse Jackson. Rather, it is a plaintive cry for the need to actively engage this problem, for the elevation of concern for racial equality to a position of priority on our government's domestic affairs agenda.

In some of my speeches and writing on this subject in the past, I have placed great weight on the crucial importance to blacks of "self-help." Some may see my present posture as at variance with those arguments. It is not. I have also written critically of blacks' continued reliance on civil-rights-era protest and legal strategies, and of the propagation of affirmative action throughout our employment and educational institutions. I have urged blacks to move "Beyond Civil Rights." I have spoken of the difference in the black community between the "enemy without"—racism—and the "enemy within"—the dysfunctional behavior of young blacks that perpetuates poverty and dependency. I have spoken of the need for blacks to face squarely the political reality that we now live in the "post-civil rights era"; that claims based on racial justice carry much less force in American public life than they once did; and that it is no longer acceptable to seek benefits for our people in the name of justice, while revealing indifference or hostility to the rights of others. Nothing I have said here should be construed as a retraction of these views. But selling these positions within the black community is made infinitely more difficult when my black critics are able to say, "But your argument plays into the hands of those who are looking for an excuse to abandon the black poor," and I find myself unable credibly to contradict them.

It is for this reason that the deteriorating quality of our public debate about civil rights matters has come to impede the internal realignment of black political strivings that is now so crucial to the interest

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of the inner-city poor and to the political health of the nation. There is a great existential challenge facing black America today—the challenge of taking control of our own future by exerting the requisite moral leadership, making the sacrifices of time and resources, and building the needed institutions so that black social and economic development may be advanced. No matter how windy the debate becomes among white liberals and conservatives as to what should be done in the public sphere, meeting this self-creating challenge ultimately depends upon black action. It is to make a mockery of the ideal of freedom to hold that, as free men and women, blacks ought nonetheless to wait passively for white Americans, of whatever political persuasion, to come to the rescue. If our people languish in dependency, while the means through which we might work toward our own advancement exist, then we have surrendered our claim to dignity and to the respect of our fellow citizens. If we are to be a truly free people, we must accept responsibility for our fate even when it does not lie wholly in our hands.

But to say this—and it is critical that blacks hear it—is not to say that there is no public responsibility. It is obvious that in the areas of education, employment training, enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, and the provision of minimal subsistence to the impoverished, the government must be involved. There are public programs—preschool education for one—that cost money, but that seem to pay even greater dividends. It is a tragic error that those of us who make the "self-help" argument in internal dialogue concerning alternative-development strategies for black Americans are often construed by the political right as making a public argument for a policy of "benign neglect." Expanded self-reliance is but one ingredient in the recipe for black progress, distinguished by the fact that it is essential for black dignity, which in turn is a precondition for true equality of the races in this country.

It makes sense to call for greater self-reliance at this time because some of what needs to be done cannot, in the nature of the case, be undertaken by government. Dealing with behavioral problems, with community values, with the attitudes and beliefs of black youngsters about responsibility, work, family, and schooling is not something government is well suited to do. The teaching of "oughts" properly belongs in the hands of private, voluntary associations—churches, families, neighborhood groups. It is also reasonable to ask those blacks who have benefited from special minority programs—such as the set-asides for black businesses—to contribute to the alleviation of the suffering of poor blacks, for without the visible ghetto poor, such programs would lack the political support needed for their continuation. Yet such internal efforts, however necessary, cannot be a panacea for the problems of the inner city. This is, truly, an American problem; we all have a stake in its alleviation; we all have a responsibility to address it forthrightly.

Thus, to begin to make progress on this extremely difficult matter will require enhanced private and public commitment alike. Yet to the extent that blacks place too much emphasis on the public responsibility, we place in danger the attainment of true equality for black Americans. By "true equality" I mean more than an approximately equal material provision among the races. Also crucial, I maintain, is an equality of respect and standing in the eyes of one's fellow citizens. Yet much of the current advocacy of blacks' interests seems inconsistent with achieving equal respect for black Americans.

Leaders in the civil rights organizations as well as in the halls of Congress remain wedded to a conception of the black condition and to a method of appealing to the rest of the polity that undermine the dignity of our people. Theirs is too much the story of discrimination, repression, hopelessness, and frustration, and too little the saga of uplift and the march forward to genuine empowerment whether others cooperate or not. These leaders seek to make blacks into the conscience of America, even if the price is the loss of our souls. They require us to present ourselves to American society as permanent victims, incapable of advance without the state-enforced philanthropy of possibly resentful whites. By evoking past suffering and current deprivations experienced by the ghetto poor, some black leaders seek to feed the guilt, and worse, the pity of the white establishment. But I hold that we blacks ought not to allow ourselves to become ever-ready doomsayers, always alert to exploit black suffering by offering it up to more-or-less sympathetic whites as a justification for incremental monetary transfers. Such a posture seems to evidence a fundamental lack of confidence in the ability of blacks to make it in America, as so many millions of immigrants have done and continue to do. Even if this method were to succeed in gaining the support it seeks, it is impossible that true equality of status in American society could lie at the end of such a road.

Much of the current, quite heated, debate over affirmative action reveals a similar lack of confidence in the capabilities of blacks to compete in American society. My concern is with the inconsistency between the broad reliance on quotas by blacks and the attainment of "true equality." There is a sense in which the demand for quotas, which many see as the only path to equality for blacks, concedes at the outset the impossibility that blacks could ever be truly equal citizens. For aside from those instances in which hiring goals are ordered by a court subsequent to a finding of illegal discrimination, and with the purpose of providing relief for those discriminated against, the use of differential standards for the hiring of blacks and whites acknowledges the inability of blacks to perform up to the white standard.

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So widespread has such practice become that, especially in the elite levels of employment, all blacks must now deal with the perception that without a quota, they would not have their jobs. All blacks, some of our "leaders" seem proud to say, owe their accomplishments to political pressures for diversity. And the effects of such thinking may be seen in our response to almost every instance of racially differential performance. When blacks cannot pass a high school proficiency test as a condition of obtaining a diploma, let us throw out the test. When black teachers cannot exhibit skills at the same level as whites, let us attack the very idea of testing teachers' skills. If black athletes less frequently achieve the minimal academic standard set for those participating in intercollegiate sports, then let us promulgate for them a separate, lower standard, even as we accuse of racism those suggesting the need for a standard in the first place. If young black men are arrested more frequently than whites for some criminal offense, then let us insist that police are disproportionately concerned about the crimes which blacks commit. If black suspension rates are higher than whites in a given school district, well, let's investigate that district for racist administrative practice. When black students are unable to gain admission at the same rate as whites to the elite public exam school in Boston, let's ask a federal judge to mandate black excellence.

The inescapable truth of the matter is that no judge can mandate excellence. No selection committee can create distinction in black scholars. No amount of circuitous legal maneuvering can obscure the social reality of inner-city black crime, or of whites' and blacks' fear of that crime. No degree of double-standard setting can make black students competitive or comfortable in academically exclusive colleges and universities. No amount of political gerrymandering can create genuine sympathy among whites for the interests and strivings of black people. Yet it is to such double-standard setting, such gerrymandering, such maneuvering that many feel compelled to turn.

Signs of the intellectual exhaustion and of the increasing political ineffectiveness of this style of leadership are now evident. Yet we cling to this method because of the way in which the claims of blacks have been most successfully pressed during the civil rights era. These claims have been based, above all else, on the status of blacks as America's historical victims. Maintenance of this claiming status requires constant emphasis on the wrongs of the past and exaggeration of present tribulations. He who leads a group of historical victims as victims must never let "them" forget what "they" have done; he must renew the indictment and keep alive the supposed moral asymmetry implicit in the respective positions of victim and victimizer. He is the preeminent architect of what British philosopher G. K. Minogue has called "suffering situations." The circumstance of his group as "underdog" becomes his most valuable political asset. Such a posture, especially in the political realm, militates against an emphasis on personal responsibility within the group and induces those who have been successful to attribute their accomplishments to fortuitous circumstance and not to their own abilities and character.

It is difficult to overemphasize the self-defeating dynamic at work here. The dictates of political advocacy require that personal inadequacies among blacks be attributed to "the system," and that emphasis by black leaders on self-improvement be denounced as irrelevant, self-serving, dishonest. Individual black men and women simply cannot fail on their own, they must be seen as never having had a chance. But where failure at the personal level is impossible, there can also be no personal successes. For a black to embrace the Horatio Alger myth, to assert as a guide to *personal* action that "there is opportunity in America," becomes a *politically* repugnant act. For each would-be black Horatio Alger indicts as inadequate or incomplete the deeply entrenched (and quite useful) notion that individual effort can never overcome the inheritance of race. Yet where there can be no black Horatio Algers to celebrate, sustaining an ethos of responsibility which might serve to extract maximal effort from the individual in the face of hardship becomes impossible as well.

James Baldwin spoke to this problem with great insight long ago. In his 1949 essay "Everybody's Protest Novel," Baldwin said of the protagonist of Richard Wright's celebrated novel *Native Son*:

> Bigger Thomas stands on a Chicago street corner watching airplanes flown by white men racing against the sun and "Goddamn" he says, the bitterness bubbling up like blood, remembering a million indignities, the terrible, rat-infested house, the humiliation of home-relief, the intense, aimless, ugly bickering, hating it; hatred smoulders through these pages like sulphur fire. All of Bigger's life is controlled, defined by his hatred and his fear. And later, his fear drives him to murder and his hatred to rape; he dies, having come, through this violence, and we are told for the first time, to a kind of life, having for the first time redeemed his manhood.

But Baldwin rejected this "redemption through rebellion" thesis as untrue to life and unworthy of art. "Bigger's tragedy," he concluded,

> is not that he is cold or black or hungry, not even that he is American, black; but that *he has accepted a theology that denies him life, that he admits the possibility of his being sub-human and feels constrained, therefore, to battle for his humanity according to those brutal criteria bequeathed him at his birth.* But our humanity

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> is our burden, our life; we need not battle for it; we need only to do what is infinitely more difficult—that is, accept it. The failure of the protest novel lies in its rejection of life, the human being, the denial of his beauty, dread, power, in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended (emphasis added).

While Baldwin's interest was essentially literary, mine is political. In either case, however, our struggle is against the deadening effect that emanates from the belief that, for the black man, "it is his categorization alone which is real and cannot be transcended." The spheres of politics and of culture intersect in this understanding of what the existence of systemic constraint implies for the possibilities of individual personality. For too many blacks, dedication to the cause of reform has been allowed to supplant the demand for individual accountability; race, and the historic crimes associated with it—real crimes!—has become the single lens through which to view social experience; the infinite potential of real human beings has been surrendered on the altar of protest. In this way does the prophecy of failure, evoked by those who take the fact of racism as barring forever blacks' access to the rich possibilities of American life, fulfill itself: "Loyalty to the race" in the struggle to be free of oppression requires the sacrifice of a primary instrument through which genuine freedom might be attained.

Moreover, the fact that there has been in the U.S. such a tenuous commitment to social provision to the indigent, independent of race, reinforces the ideological trap. Blacks think we must cling to victim status because it provides the only secure basis upon which to press for attention from the rest of the polity to the problems of our most disadvantaged fellows. It is important to distinguish here between the socio-economic consequences of the claims that are advanced on the basis of the victim status of blacks (such as the pressure for racially preferential treatment) and their symbolic, ideological role. For even though the results of this claiming often accrue to the advantage of better-off blacks, and in no way constitute a solution to the problems of the poor, the desperate plight of the poorest makes it unthinkable that whites could ever be "let off the hook" by relinquishing the historically based claims—that is, by a broad acceptance within the black community of the notion that individual blacks bear personal responsibility for their fate.

The dilemmas of the black underclass pose in stark terms the most pressing, unresolved problem of the social and moral sciences: how to reconcile individual and social responsibility. The problem goes back to Kant. The moral and social paradox of society is this: we are on the one hand determined and constrained by social, cultural, not to mention biological forces. Yet, on the other hand, if society is to work, we must believe and behave as if we do indeed determine our actions. Neither of the pat political formulas for dealing with this paradox are adequate by themselves. The mother of a homeless family is not simply a victim of forces acting on her; she is, in part, responsible for her plight and that of her children. But she is also being acted on by forces—social, economic, cultural, political—larger than herself. She is conditioned by an environment; she is not an island; she does not have complete freedom to determine her future. It is callous nonsense to insist that she does, just as it is mindlessness to insist that she can do nothing for herself and her children until "society" reforms. In fact, she is responsible for her condition; but we also must help her—that is our responsibility.

Now blacks have, in fact, been constrained by a history of racism and limited opportunity. Some of these effects continue to manifest themselves into the present time. Yet now that greater opportunity exists, taking advantage of it requires that we accept personal responsibility for our own fate, even though the effects of this past remain with us in part. But emphasis on the personal responsibility of blacks takes the political pressure off those outside the black community, who also have a responsibility, as citizens of this republic, to be actively engaged in trying to change the structures that constrain the black poor in such a way that they can more effectively assume responsibility for themselves and exercise their inherent and morally required capacity to choose. That is, there is an inherent link between these two sides of the "responsibility coin"—between acceptance among blacks of personal responsibility for our actions, and acceptance among all Americans of their social responsibilities as citizens.

My point to conservatives should be plain. Rather than simply incanting the "personal responsibility" mantra, we must also be engaged in helping these people who so desperately need our help. We are not relieved of our responsibility to do so by the fact that Ted Kennedy and Jesse Jackson are promoting legislation aimed at helping this same population with which we disagree. Remember King's description of the animating idea of the Declaration of Independence: "*Every* man is heir to the legacy of worthiness." "Those people" languishing in the drug-infested, economically depressed, crime-ridden central cities—those people are *our* people. We must be in relationship with them. The point here transcends politics and policy. The necessity of being engaged with the least among us is a moral necessity. We Americans cannot live up to our self-image as a "city on a hill," a beacon of freedom and hope for all the world, if we fail this test.

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My point to blacks should also be plain. We must let go of the past and take responsibility for our future. What may seem to be an unacceptable political risk is also an absolute moral necessity. This is a dilemma from which I believe we blacks can escape only by an act of faith—faith in ourselves, faith in our nation, and ultimately, faith in the God of our forefathers. He has not brought us this far only to abandon us now. As suggested by the citation from the book of Hebrews with which I began, we are indeed "surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses"—the spirits of our forebears who, under much more difficult and hostile conditions, made it possible for us to enjoy the enormous opportunities that we have today. It would be a profound desecration of their memory were we to preach despair to our children when we are in fact so much closer than were our fathers to the cherished goal of full equality. We must believe that our fellow citizens are now truly ready to allow us an equal place in this society. We must believe that we have within ourselves the ability to succeed on a level playing field, if we give it our all. We must be prepared to put the past to rest; to forgive if not forget; to retire the outmoded and inhibiting role of "the victim."

Embracing the role of "the victim" has unacceptable costs. It is undignified and demeaning. It leads to a situation where the celebration among blacks of individual success and of the personal traits associated with it comes to be seen, quite literally, as a betrayal of the black poor, because such celebration undermines the legitimacy of what has proven to be their most valuable political asset—their supposed helplessness. There is, hidden in this desperate assertion of victim status by blacks to an increasingly skeptical white polity, an unfolding tragedy of profound proportion. Black leaders, confronting their people's need and their own impotency, believe they must continue to portray blacks as "the conscience of the nation." Yet the price extracted for playing this role in incompletely fulfilled lives and unrealized personal potential amounts to a "loss of our own souls." As consummate victims, we lay ourselves at the feet of our fellows, exhibiting our lack of achievement as evidence of *their* failure, hoping to wring from their sense of conscience what we must assume, by the very logic of our claim, lies beyond our individual capacities to attain, all the while bemoaning how limited that sense of conscience seems to be. This way lies not the freedom so long sought by our ancestors but, instead, a continuing serfdom. FT

LEAF WITH BERRY

At the last rock of the last ledge of the last climb,
retreat blocked, he went to the edge
to look over his days and ways.

The earth lay below in colors. He watched it
with desire, but it was spread out far
far below, and was unobtainable.

At his foot was a green thing — a leaf,
slick and single, with one red berry,
had prized open a crevice in granite.

Over timberline are no trees, no bushes,
granite only, and a tremendous wind;
but the slick soft texture of the lead

and the red slick shape of the berry
had sprung from some seed, some kind of seed,
so he let them be there for him.

Though the wind made the sound of wolves, and sun
had not warmed the granite, he gathered
that he was to take heart.

Josephine Jacobsen

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Ecumenism Without Illusions: A Catholic Perspective

Avery Dulles

From a Christian pont of view, the twentieth century might well be called the century of ecumenism. Several dates serve to mark the crucial stages of development. Among them are 1910, when the World Missionary Conference met at Edinburgh; 1925, the date of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm; 1927, the first World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in Switzerland; and 1948, the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam. Of equal importance with these dates is 1964, the adoption of the Decree on Ecumenism at Vatican Council II, the step that thrust the Roman Catholic Church into the midstream of the ecumenical movement.

I

The ecumenism of Vatican II goes far beyond the Decree itself; according to the wish of Pope John XXIII, it permeates all the council documents. The Decree on Ecumenism stands out as a wonderfully concise and balanced summary of Catholic principles. It bears up extremely well after the passage of a quarter of a century.

The ultimate goal of ecumenism, according to the Decree, is the full visible unity of all Christians in a single communion. The starting point is the imperfect communion that already exists among Christians by virtue of their shared faith in Christ, their practice of baptism, their use of the same Scriptures, and many other bonds. Ecumenism is intended to increase the communion that now exists by overcoming doctrinal divisions and by a whole series of measures that could lead to mutual recognition of membership and ministries, and eventually to pulpit and altar fellowship. These objectives may be viewed as intermediary goals of the ecumenical movement. The means to be used include prayer, theological dialogue, and practical cooperation.

In its program for ecumenism, Vatican II adopted what is frequently called the *communio* model. The Latin term *communio,* like the Greek term *koinonia,* lacks a precise English equivalent. It may be roughly translated by "communion," but that term has become rather narrowly identified with eucharistic sharing. *Communio* or *koinonia* better conveys the ecclesial and theological overtones; it means a fellowship based on a common sharing of divine life. This fellowship, although primarily spiritual and interior, is mediated, sealed, and strengthened by external signs, such as common professions of faith, joint sacramental worship, shared pastoral leadership, and collaborative action.

The Extraordinary Synod of 1985 reaffirmed the ecumenical vision of the council. "The ecclesiology of communion," said the Final Report, "is the central and fundamental idea of the council's documents." A little later the same report went on to say: "After those 20 years we can affirm that ecumenism has inscribed itself deeply and indelibly in the consciousness of the church. We bishops ardently desire that the incomplete communion already existing with the non-Catholic churches and communities might, with the grace of God, come to the point of full communion."

Although different models of ecumenism, such as

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the federal and the conciliar, continue to compete for influence, the *communio* model is increasingly dominant in ecumenical circles today, not only among Roman Catholics but also among Anglicans, Orthodox, and some Protestants. Long before Vatican II the Anglicans at several Lambeth conferences depicted themselves as a communion seeking full fellowship with other Christian bodies. The Orthodox have repeatedly asserted that the *una sancta*, the one holy Church of God, is essentially a communion of local or regional churches. The Seventh Assembly of the World Lutheran Federation at Budapest in 1984, in its "Statement on the Self-Understanding of the Federation," referred to the "Lutheran communion of churches," terminology used again at the Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, in the first week of February 1990.

A similar shift toward a *communio* model may be found in the history of the proposed Church of Christ Uniting, hitherto known as the Consultation on Church Union. According to a new plan drawn up in 1988, it intends to establish a "covenant communion of churches" to which communities of various denominational allegiances may belong as they "seek to form a visible unity that will be at once truly catholic, truly evangelical, and truly reformed." It remains to be seen how, and to what extent, churches such as the Roman Catholic could relate to such a covenant communion. Can there be agreement, for instance, about the requirements of true catholicity?

II

During the twenty-five years since the adoption of Vatican II's Decree, the Catholic Church has been heavily involved in ecumenical activity. To a remarkable extent this activity has been stimulated and directed from Rome. Pope Paul VI and John Paul II, following in the footsteps of John XXIII, have both given high priority to ecumenism, and have repeatedly met with the ecumenical patriarchs of Constantinople, the archbishops of Canterbury, and other Christian leaders. The Secretariat for Promoting the Unity of Christians, under the direction of Cardinal Augustin Bea and his associate and successor, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, gave steady, prudent, tactful, and progressive leadership. There is every sign that this will be continued under the Archbishop Edward Cassidy, who was named in December 1989 to take charge of the new Pontifical Council for Promoting the Unity of Christians.

Among the more fruitful ecumenical efforts, a place of special prominence belongs to the ecumenical dialogues. The Holy See itself has sponsored important international dialogues with the Orthodox, the Anglicans, the Lutherans, and others. Statements such as the final report of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) and the documents of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission on the Eucharist, on Ministry, and on several other themes have become part of the theological heritage of all ecumenically involved churches. The international dialogues have been replicated on the national level, notably in Germany, France, and the United States. In this country the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue has produced a valuable series of volumes on topics such as the Nicene Creed, Baptism, the Eucharist, Ministry, Papal Primacy, Teaching Authority in the Church, and Justification by Faith. On February 17, 1990, this Dialogue unanimously approved a long and detailed statement on "The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary."

The bilateral conversations, both on the national and on the international level, have fed into multilateral statements, such as those of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. The Holy See has collaborated with the World Council on several joint theological commission reports. It has also appointed Catholic members of the Faith and Order Commission. At Lima in 1982 that commission completed a landmark paper on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry that harvested, in a brilliant manner, the fruits of fifty years of dialogue. This document strongly recommended the adoption of the threefold pattern of ministry (bishops, presbyters, and deacons) and the ordination of bishops in the historic succession as a sign and symbol of the apostolic succession of the Church itself.

In the United States the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs submitted a basically favorable report on the Lima text in September 1985. The Vatican Secretariat for Promoting the Unity of Christians, in its response of July 1987, characterized the Lima text as "perhaps the most significant result of the [Faith and Order] Movement so far." But it raised a number of difficulties. In particular the Secretariat remarked that in view of persisting disagreements about apostolic succession and the ordination of women, the proposals regarding the mutual recognition of ministries were premature.

The work of the theological dialogues has been supported by intensive theological research, much of it conducted or sponsored by ecumenical institutes such as those at Rome, Strasbourg, Graymoor on Hudson, and Collegeville, Minnesota. To an increasing degree, ecumenism has penetrated the teaching of theology and seminary formation. The Boston Theological Institute is typical of similar consortia existing in major theological centers such as Chicago, Berkeley, and Washington, D.C.

These cursory observations may suffice to illustrate the Catholic involvement in ecumenism in the two and a half decades since Vatican II. If additional evidence were required, it would be possible to mention the many ecumenical societies and discussion groups that exist throughout the country, and the activities of the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical

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Officers, including the annual meetings of the National Workshop for Christian Unity. Reference could also be made to the strong Catholic presence in the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches, to the growing Catholic participation in state and metropolitan councils of churches, and to the covenants being made between Catholic parishes and dioceses and their Episcopal and Lutheran counterparts. In view of all these developments, talk about ecumenical stagnation would be, to say the least, exaggerated.

III

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the ecumenical movement is today facing severe problems. The excitement of the honeymoon period of the 1960s has definitely abated. New difficulties have arisen on a number of fronts.

The theological dialogues have moved beyond the stage at which the various Christian groups were rediscovering each other, experiencing surprise at how much substantive Christianity they could find outside their own tradition. They have seen and expressed the unity that already exists in Christian beliefs and practices. Now that the easy agreements have been achieved, it becomes necessary to face the hard questions. Thus far none of the dialogues has been able to come up with a striking convergence, let alone a consensus, on thorny issues such as papal primacy of jurisdiction, the Mass as propitiatory sacrifice, purgatory, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the invocation of saints, or the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood. To an increasing extent the dialogues are running up against hardcore differences on which the theologians of each side do not feel authorized or even inclined to change the established positions of their churches.

It is not altogether easy to separate the agreements from the disagreements. Just as the dialogues, in their first phase, were able to bring to the surface hidden agreements in the previous disagreements, so now, in their second phase, they are exposing hidden disagreements within the previous agreements. Let me take some examples from the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in this country. The dialogue partners in 1965 allegedly reached agreement on the Nicene dogma of the divinity of Christ, but how solid is the agreement if one group understands the dogma as an infallible decision of the Church while the other regards it as a correct but reformable interpretation of Scripture? Do the two parties really agree on whether Christ has a divine nature, or does one group understand the divinity in terms of a merely functional Christology in which Jesus is God "for us" but not in his ontological constitution?

Or again, to turn to a different area, do Catholics and Lutherans agree about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, as was claimed in 1967, if one group finds Christ present only in the actual administration of the sacrament while the other is committed to a real presence that persists after the eucharistic service is concluded? Do we agree about ministry, as the 1970 statement seemed to suggest, if one group sees ordination as an official recognition of a ministry already conferred by God, while the other looks upon ordination as a sacrament, effectively conferring radically new powers? And with reference to the 1983 statement on justification by faith, how complete is the agreement if one group maintains that justification consists in faith alone whereas the other holds that faith does not justify unless it is animated by charity and fruitful in good works? And finally, to mention a question that was asked in our latest dialogue, can we really agree about Christ as the sole Mediator of salvation if we do not agree about whether the invocation of the saints and Mary detracts from the sole mediatorship of Christ? The agreements are frail, and are in danger of coming unraveled when the contentious questions are raised. If they do become unraveled, we could easily fall back into the polemics of the past.

A further source of difficulty, compounding those already mentioned, is the fact that the most ecumenically involved churches have been suffering a decline in numbers and in vigor. Conversely, churches that adamantly stand by their confessional positions, and polemically attack all other groups, seem to be gaining in commitment and in membership. If the mainline churches are not to lose out to unecumenical churches and sects of a fundamentalist or pentecostal character, they need to recover their confessional nerve and offer their own distinctive witness more clearly. Some have suggested that the ecumenical movement needs to be reconfessionalized, but it remains to be seen whether a reconfessionalized Christianity can maintain its ecumenical thrust.

In some circles the ecumenism of the past fifty years is being accused of excessive confessionalism. It is often said that ecumenism has been too defensive, overconcerned with the preservation of distinctive identity, unwilling to take risks for the sake of inclusiveness. Rome and the Catholic bishops are often criticized for being too intransigent. The existing churches, according to this view, should be willing to make sacrifices and even to die in order for the coming great Church to be born.

The internal problems currently faced by most Christian churches constitute a further obstacle to ecumenism. In Roman Catholicism the Holy See and many of the bishops have felt obliged to exert themselves to maintain an acceptable degree of unity within the Church and to keep the growing pluralism of doctrine and practice from destroying the very identity of the Church. Some ecumenists fear that the restoration of intra-Catholic discipline may make the Catholic Church less ecumenically hospitable. Some non-Catholics might be willing to consider entering

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into a closer union with Catholicism if it could accommodate a broader spectrum of opinions and practices.

Still other problems stem from the collapse of Eurocentrism and the new sense of planetary unity. Christians today find themselves challenged to take the non-Christian religions seriously. The interest shown in ecumenism a generation ago has shifted, in great part, to interreligious dialogue. The two concerns are sometimes felt to be competitive. Christian ecumenists tend to emphasize the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation as pillars of Christian unity, and thus to insist on the very things that divide Christianity from all other religions. The ecumenical movement, to the extent that it succeeds, draws Christians together in a solidarity that is experienced as threatening to Jews and other non-Christians. Some Christians, concerned for the success of interreligious dialogue, propose that the Christian dogmas be put into question or even treated as myths on a par with those of other religions. Disputes rage among Christians about whether non-Christians are dependent on Christ for salvation. Radical questioning of this type tends to remove the ground from under Christian ecumenism.

Finally, objections come from social activists. Ecumenism has traditionally been motivated by a concern to spread the faith. Christians must be one, according to the Lord's own saying, "so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21). Many contemporary Christians seem to be less concerned with spreading the faith than with solving social and environmental questions. Something of this pragmatic orientation was already present in the Life and Work movement of the 1920s, but it was turned back by the neo-orthodox tide of the next generation and by the accession of Catholics, with their doctrinal preoccupations, to the ecumenical movement. Today, however, the doctrinal ecumenism represented by the Lima paper of 1982 no longer arouses broad popular interest. Typical of the current trend is the subject of the world conference that met on March 6-13, 1990, at Seoul, South Korea, under the sponsorship of the World Council of Churches. Its themes were "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation."

IV

These mounting difficulties seem to indicate that the ecumenical period inaugurated for Catholics by Vatican Council II may be coming to an end. The programs set forth in the Decree on Ecumenism have borne excellent fruits, but some reassessment of the agenda may now be in order. Possibly we stand on the verge of a new ecumenical moment in which we shall have to generate new options and reread the Decree on Ecumenism with new eyes. Although the choice of the right course is still to be determined, I shall take the risk of trying to delineate several directions.

1) *The Primacy of Truth.* In order to meet popular and journalistic expectations, the churches are under pressure to bury their doctrinal scruples and come up with dramatic new consensus statements. The prevailing intellectual climate, deeply infected by relativism and agnosticism, increases this pressure and makes ecumenism appear as a mere exercise of diplomacy. Differences between the churches and even between the religions tend to be written off as matters of taste, culture, or historical conditioning. The danger is that a unity purchased at the expense of deeply held convictions may turn out to be illusory. By seeking to accommodate all points of view we may cheapen the value of communion itself.

Many theologians involved in ecumenical dialogue are coming to reject this easy relativism. The dialogues, they find, have shown the continuing importance of the traditional doctrinal issues. After working for a generation to build up mutual confidence and friendship, the dialogues have matured to the stage at which the divisive issues can be squarely faced. Such theologians are today eager to explore the most controversial areas with a frank recognition that the prospects of full agreement are minimal. The differences turn out not to be merely cultural and linguistic, but substantive and important. The dialogues can usefully clarify the issues; they should not be asked to produce ambiguous compromises that paper over the real disagreements. If faith is, as we believe, a matter of fidelity to the truth given in Jesus Christ, unity must not be purchased at the expense of honest conviction.

It follows, then, that we should not be in too great haste to overcome our diversities. In order to act responsibly we must first of all get possession of ourselves. For a powerful statement of the case for distinctiveness, I recommend the article by the Methodist Stanley Hauerwas in these pages ("The Importance of Being Catholic: A Protestant View," March). Hauerwas says to Catholics: "I want you to be Catholics. I . . . believe that there is nothing more important for the future unity of the Church than for you to be Catholic. . . . You have been so anxious to be like us that you have failed in your ecumenical task to help us see what it means for any of us to be faithful to the Gospel on which our unity depends."

2) *Mutual enrichment.* The ecumenism of recent generations has suffered from the tendency to reach agreements on the basis of the lowest common denominator. In the name of the "hierarchy of truths" mentioned in the Decree on Ecumenism, some theologians expect the churches to settle for agreement on a limited number of fundamental dogmas. Prominent theologians such as Karl Rahner have even called for immediate union among all the major churches and confessions on the basis of the Bible and the creeds of the early Church, provided only that the churches do not attack one another's dogmas as manifestly

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opposed to the gospel. Such proposals are in my estimation excessively reductionist.

The Decree on Ecumenism did indeed speak of a hierarchy of truths in which primacy was given to the triune God and to the Incarnation of his Son, our divine Redeemer. The Decree also maintained that for the sake of unity "one must 'impose no burden beyond what is indispensable' (Acts 15:28)." But the fathers at Vatican II, when they referred to the hierarchy of truths, surely did not envisage that the Catholic Church should treat all the dogmas defined since the sixteenth century as optional. On the contrary, they warned against a "false conciliatory approach" that could harm the purity of Catholic doctrine, which must be presented, according to the Decree, in its entirety.

No church seeking to promote ecumenism would do well to jettison its distinctive heritage. A nondescript union of churches on the basis of a common minimum would be impoverishing to all concerned. The world does not need a gigantic supermarket church that stands for nothing in particular, while offering everything to everybody. Much of the hostility and suspicion encountered by the ecumenical movement comes from the fear that it aims at such a diminishment.

My own involvement in ecumenism over the last forty years has led me to cherish other values. I have acquired a deeper realization of how much the Catholic Church has to contribute from the wealth of its own heritage. At the same time I have gained an enormous respect for the other churches that have rich traditions of their own. The Orthodox, I have found, possess an immensely rich heritage of trinitarian and sacramental piety handed down from the Eastern Fathers. They have a sense of spiritual communion or *koinonia* that supplements and partly corrects the more legalistic approach characteristic of the West. From Lutherans and other Protestants I have learned the spiritual power of a theology of the Word of God and its capacity to complete and balance the more sacramental vision of the Catholic and Orthodox churches. The task of ecumenism, as I see it, is not to choose among legalism, sacramentalism, and evangelicalism but to see how these various approaches can be harmoniously integrated, without loss of their respective strengths, into a plenitude that is, in the best sense of the word, Catholic.

Too often the ecumenist is perceived as asking how little we need to accept in order to be faithful to Christ and the gospel. In the perspective I am proposing the question is rather: how much can the various churches give to, and accept from, one another? Authentic ecumenism is not a matter of whittling away from one's heritage in order to get back to the supposed simplicity of the gospel. More appropriately it is a matter of sharing from our own riches while seeking to receive as much as we responsibly can from others. In their Common declaration on October 2, 1989, Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Runcie put the matter very succinctly: "The ecumenical journey is not only about the removal of obstacles, but also about the sharing of gifts."

3) *New Alignments.* Hitherto the principal participants in ecumenism have been the more liberal churches, those with the least demanding doctrinal and liturgical heritage. Churches with firm doctrinal standards and stable traditions were considered at best dubiously ecumenical. In an ecumenism of mutual enrichment, such as I am here recommending, the priorities are reversed. The churches that have held most steadfastly to the deposit of biblical and patristic faith, and those that have successfully resisted the trends of the times, may have the most to offer to an age that is surfeited with the lax and the ephemeral. The time is ripe to welcome the more traditional and conservative churches into the dialogue. For the Catholic Church it may not prove easy to reach consensus with either the Orthodox or the conservative evangelicals, but these churches and communities may have more to offer than some others because they have dared to be different. The adequacy of their positions may and must be challenged, but they should be invited to challenge us in their turn.

Through earnest dialogue among communities that hold fast to their own heritage of faith, it may be possible to effect a new kind of fellowship, very valuable in its own way. A community of witnessing dialogue cutting across denominational barriers is one of the finest fruits of ecumenism. In such a community each church can profit from listening to clear and unambiguous presentations of the others' points of view; it stands to gain from hearing its own doctrines criticized from the perspective of outsiders. In this way individual believers may achieve a deeper realization of the ecclesial character of their own faith-commitments; the churches can learn to formulate their distinctive doctrines more circumspectly, and all can acquire a deeper appreciation of other Christian traditions. As a result the participating churches may be able to find a path toward greater convergence in the truth.

4) *Spiritual Renewal.* With our characteristically Western bias toward activity and measurable results, we Americans are often guilty of excessive reliance on our own abilities and projects. Our ecumenical experience of recent years, with its difficulties and setbacks, has taught us to respect the teaching of the Decree of Ecumenism to the effect that the goal of the ecumenical movement "transcends human energies and capacities." The Church must consequently place all its hope in Christ's prayer for unity and in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about what lies beyond merely human powers. According to the Decree, the soul of the entire ecumenical movement is spiritual ecumenism, which consists in a "change

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of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians."

This aspect of ecumenism has been less conspicuously pursued in the post-conciliar period than have the activities of theological dialogue, common witness, and practical collaboration. We have tended to overlook the wise admonition of the Decree that "every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling." As a commentary on this passage I should like to quote a word of advice given by the great French ecumenist, Yves Congar, speaking to Catholics in 1943:

> I believe more than ever that the essential ecumenical activity of the Catholic Church should be to live its own life more fully and genuinely; to purify itself as far as possible, to grow in faithfulness, in good works, in depth of prayer and in union with God. In being fully herself, in the full strength of her vigor, she will develop her ecumenical power.

This advice, fully consonant with the teaching of the Decree of Ecumenism, remains as valid today as when it was originally given. Catholics who desire to contribute to the apostolate of Christian unity cannot do better than to gain a thorough grasp and deep love of their own distinctive heritage. More than this, they must be open to the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, who alone can impart the wisdom and strength needed for overcoming the remaining obstacles.

V

My recommendations have been limited to ecumenism in the traditional sense as an endeavor to bring the Christian churches into more harmonious and fruitful relationships with a view to eventual unity. I have not tried to comment here on interreligious dialogue and on the apostolates of peace, justice, and ecology. All of these pursuits have their own importance, but they should not be seen as substitutes for the kind of ecumenism I have been discussing. The quest for visible unity will always remain necessary as long as Christianity is divided. The separated churches and communities can seriously hinder the cause of Christ if they are mutually indifferent or hostile. But by entering into dynamic and positive relationships, sustained by sincere fidelity to the truth as it has come to them through their respective traditions, the churches can revitalize one another and draw closer to the full unity that Christ intends for all who believe in him. FT

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Law, Laws, and Human Community

Mary Ann Glendon

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The Romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone. . . .

W. H. Auden, *September 1, 1939*

The April 1989 *Scientific American* contains a report on the principal findings of a long-term study of the effects of adversity in early childhood on human development. The article recounts how an ambitious team of research psychologists undertook to study the entire group of children born in 1955 on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, beginning with prenatal histories taken from the mothers and following up on each child's development at ages one, two, ten, eighteen, and again at thirty-one or thirty-two. The great interest of the study arises from the fact that, as the years went by, the researchers noticed that many of the children they had identified as "at high risk" (i.e., children subject to four or more serious disadvantages) were able to lead satisfying and socially productive lives as adults. Of the 698 children born on Kauai in 1955, 201 were in the high-risk category, exposed to various combinations of perinatal trauma, family discord, chronic poverty, and alcoholic, undereducated, or mentally disturbed parents. Yet one-third of these disadvantaged children "went on to develop healthy personalities, stable careers, and strong interpersonal relationships."

Unlike the many studies that work backward through individual case histories to try to discover what caused or contributed to problems in adult life, the Kauai project sheds some light on what the researchers call "protective factors" that help children to thrive in spite of adverse early conditions. Not surprisingly, some of the factors that were found to assist children to become "survivors" are largely beyond the reach of law and public policy. For example, certain fortunate children possess, apparently even from infancy, qualities that enable them to elicit positive responses from others. And, as was already well known, children in general benefit from having at least one caretaker with whom they can establish a close bond, and from having structure and rules in the home environment.

What should be of interest to policy makers, however, is that several protective factors identified in the Kauai study are of a type that may be susceptible to social reinforcement. School, for example, played a crucial role in the lives of many of the survivor-children as "a home away from home, a refuge from a disordered household." Many of the children also found opportunities for friendship, role models, mentors, and confidants in church groups, the YMCA or YWCA, 4-H groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, athletic groups, and the like. As the researchers put it, "With the help of these support networks, the resilient children developed a sense of meaning in their lives and a belief that they could control their fate." Active participation in a church group was often a "critical turning point" in a child's life.

By affirming the importance of surrounding and supporting communities to poor children and children whose home life is in disarray, the Kauai study challenges us to reflect on what might be done to shore up, or at least to avoid damaging, these structures. Significantly, the study found that neither formal social service agencies nor mental health professionals had contributed much to the development of survivor children. This led the researchers to suggest that "in

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many situations it might make better sense and be less costly as well to strengthen such available informal ties to kin and community than it would to introduce additional layers of bureaucracy into delivery of services."

The Kauai children, like other Americans of their generation, were born just in time to experience the great demographic upheavals and the ambitious social programs of the 1960s. Although the relative isolation and the low geographic mobility of their island may have sheltered them somewhat from the winds of social change, the study shows that families on Kauai were experiencing the same stresses as American families generally. It was just in this period that, as Nathan Glazer put it in *The Limits of Social Policy*, we witnessed "the breakdown of traditional ways of handling distress," ways that "are located in the family primarily, but also in the ethnic group, the neighborhood, the church." Glazer, like many other observers, believes that in our mostly well-intentioned efforts to deal with the breakdown of these structures, "our social policies are weakening them further and making matters in some important respects worse." Whatever the cause, it is undisputed today, over thirty years after the Kauai study began, that more American children are in poverty and in broken families than ever before.

This may well be so, a sympathetic lawmaker or policymaker might say, but how on earth does one strengthen family and community ties? When we begin to ponder this question, we encounter a scotoma, a kind of blind spot, in legal and political discourse. We have a highly developed apparatus for thinking about and dealing with the individual and the State, but we lack adequate concepts and even words for a legal-political approach to those intermediate institutions within which the personalities of men, women, and children are formed, and upon which human beings depend for support and self-realization. This deficiency is strikingly apparent in the Supreme Court's church-state jurisprudence (where the landmark cases as often as not involve the family, children, and schools). Our legal system, and especially our constitutional law, tends to overlook informal communities of memory and mutual aid even though our society counts heavily on them to perform indispensable social functions.

II

Nothing is simpler than to point to deficiencies in the way our huge, increasingly heterogeneous nation grapples with the problem of delivering basic services to its needy members or to persons who, like so many of the Kauai children, are at serious risk. There is widespread disillusionment both with the characteristic reliance of liberals on government and of conservatives on the market to combat social ills. Charles Murray's controversial manifesto, *Losing Ground*, fueled skepticism about ambitious public programs by documenting in some detail how poverty and other social problems have worsened over the period of greatest governmental attention to them.

But while Murray's perception of the weaknesses of existing social-assistance programs is widely shared, his view that a "hands-off" policy is the best way to aid the disadvantaged is not. Thus, much reformist thinking tends to concentrate on how government programs might be made more effective. In this vein, Lisbeth and Daniel Schorr's *Within Our Reach* describes a number of programs that have produced good results, tries to identify the features that made them work, and argues that we should try to replicate these scattered successes. The books by Murray and the Schorrs are fairly representative of the current state of the discussion, the first pointing to numerous program failures and suggesting the wastefulness and positive harm of government intervention overall; the second pointing to specific successes, and arguing for the necessity and feasibility of expanded government action building on them.

Largely ignored in the wrangling between liberals and conservatives over social programs are those structures of civil society that may be able to aid the disadvantaged more effectively in both economic and human terms than large-scale public or private bureaucracies. The debate has generally been framed as one between renewed commitment to government programs and additional spurs to individual self-reliance—a choice, that is, between faith in government and faith in the market. It may be, however, that both positions are partly correct—that we *do* need a renewed and increased commitment of our collective resources to relieve existing misery, but that, in the long run, we also need to empower people and communities to deal more effectively with their own problems. It does not follow, however, that governmental aid is best deployed by government agents or that the empowerment of individuals and communities is most effectively fostered by abandoning them to their own resources. If the welfare state needs individual citizens who can sustain a sense of obligation to strangers; if individuals, in order to develop a capacity for empathy and cooperation, need families; if families, in order to function effectively, need supporting communities of various sorts; and if communities are being eroded under present conditions, we may need to break out of the standard liberal and conservative frameworks. It may be that a long-range, ecological perspective is required in order to determine when and what kind of social intervention is required and when abstention or retreat is the better course to pursue.

The problem of inattention to communities of memory and mutual aid arises quite naturally from the fact that, for most of American history, there was no particular reason to pay special attention to them. They were just there, like gravity, on whose continued existence we rely, even though at some level of our

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consciousness we know that without it we would go flying off into space in all directions. In all likelihood, the Founders simply took for granted the dense texture of eighteenth-century American society with its economically interdependent families and its vital local townships. Whatever their own "enlightened" views on religion, our early leaders probably supposed that churches deeply embedded in community life would always be around, too. How could they have foreseen that family bonds would become increasingly fluid, detachable, and interchangeable as the family declined in importance as a determinant of individual standing and security? In their world, where four out of five (non-slave) men were self-employed, they could hardly have anticipated how many Americans one day would be dependent for their livelihood on large impersonal public and private organizations, or how much power these organizations would wield. Nor could they have imagined that religion would become for many an affair between a talking box and an individual alone in his room.

In referring to the Founders, I do not mean to visit the sins of the sons upon their fathers. The fact is that by the time stable families and communities could no longer be taken for granted in American society, the posture of law and government toward them had shifted from mere inattention to a more studied indifference. In our own time, by promoting individual rights at the expense of nearly every other social value in family law, labor law, and constitutional law, we have deprived families, churches, and other forms of fellowship of some of their mutually sustaining influences. Certain family-law and welfare reforms have been carried out, for example, with little regard for the ways in which they might appear to be discouraging personal responsibility. Urban renewal programs often carelessly wiped out entire neighborhoods and irreplaceable social networks. A "wall of separation," erected between church and state, made it difficult for government to benefit from the experience and successes of religious communities in performing certain essential social functions.

Political factors, as Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Richard E. Morgan have pointed out, made it difficult to change course even when it became clear that something was amiss. Groups concerned, as Morgan put it, with "maximizing the provision of human services by the state (especially in education) and confining private sector institutions (especially the churches) to wholly private matters" gained in power and influence. The efforts of the education and welfare bureaucracies often seemed directed toward their own perpetuation more than toward meeting the needs of the populations they were created to serve.

Also contributing to an increasingly inhospitable climate for mediating structures have been the special characteristics of the technocrats who predominate in modern governments, political parties, corporations, and mass media. Operating at considerable remove from the life of the average citizen, such persons often lack strong ties to persons and places, religious beliefs, or tradition. Geographically mobile and deriving prestige, power, and satisfaction from their work, those who wield the most influence in modern societies are, as Robert Rodes has observed, often "very free in adopting measures that undermine the geographical stability and delicate communities on which others depend for practical and emotional support." Much as Michael Dukakis during his 1988 presidential campaign wanted to dispel the stigma of the dreaded "L-word," he could not bring himself to utter the "R" word. Thus, affirming his attachment to what he called "Old World values" to an audience at an ethnic festival in New Brunswick, New Jersey, he proclaimed, "Dedication to work, to family, to community, to neighborhood: Those are the values I believe in." (So much for the old Democratic commitment to labor, family, *church,* and neighborhood.)

It is as though the principal actors in our legal system had put on special lenses that deprived them of the ability to see connections among various social systems and subsystems—all of them continually on the move. The writer of an unsigned article in *The New Yorker,* describing a feeling experienced at the funeral of a friend whose long and happy life had been spent as a wife and mother, caught it well:

> What chilled me was a more general sense of the transformation of our society from one that strengthens the bonds between people to one that is, at best, indifferent to them; a sense of the inevitable fraying of the net of connections between people at many critical intersections, of which the marital knot is only one. Each fraying connection accelerates others. A break in one connection, such as attachment to a stable community, puts pressure on other connections: marriage, the relationship between parents and children, religious affiliation, a feeling of connection with the past—even citizenship, that sense of membership in a large community which grows best when it is grounded in membership in a small one.

So far as the legal system is concerned, its prevailing emphasis on "independent" individuality is disconcertingly at odds with the social reality of dependency and interdependence. The proportion of dependent persons in our society has hardly changed since the turn of the century. Even with the steady proliferation of various kinds of public assistance, services, and institutional care, families are still the major means though which society deals with persons who are *not* independent: the young, the aged, the sick, the severely disabled, and the needy. Caretaking itself begets more dependency, for the family members

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who perform caretaking services (mostly women) significantly impair their own ability to be self-sufficient in so doing.

What has changed in recent years, then, is not the proportion of the population that needs caretaking services, but the ability of families to deliver them. Our prevailing legal emphasis on the free, self-determining individual fits quite well with the series of economic and social changes that, by liberating so many of us from family and group ties, have dramatically affected the capacity of families to carry out all the tasks for which society continues to rely on them. Today's two-earner and female-headed families have much more need for outside support systems than did the now-atypical homemaker-breadwinner household. The main burden still falls on women to raise children and to care for the sick and elderly, but most of these women are now also working outside the home—at jobs where their pay, status, and security are inferior to those of most male workers. The position of these "dependent/caretakers" is doubly precarious: they have an insecure niche in the workplace and they are vulnerable to divorce at home. In this historically novel situation, no country in the world has devised a complete substitute for the voluntary provision of care, services, and income by family members.

Increasingly, then, families need help. But the same social changes that have attenuated family ties have also weakened traditional support systems outside the family. Despite much vague talk about "family policy" and "strengthening" the family, there is little reason to think we know whether and how law and government might be able to come to the aid of over-strained families. Debates framed in terms of a choice between intervention and nonintervention, however, do not seem particularly fruitful. They obscure the fact that modern governments cannot avoid influencing families, directly and indirectly, in countless ways. Conspicuously missing from political and legal discourse is the recognition that family members may need nurturing environments as much as they need direct aid, and that families themselves may need surrounding supportive communities in order to function in an optimal manner.

But are we not caught in a vicious cycle? With families and communities not only fraying at the edges but dissolving at their core, how can we not look to the State to take over some of the functions they once performed? But if individuals increasingly look to government for aid in distress, does this not further undermine families and other informal sources of support? At what stage are conditions in the primary groups of society so chaotic that they cease to produce men and women capable of cooperating in a collective enterprise and responding to the needs of strangers? At what point or points could one intervene in this cycle and attempt to reverse its direction?

III

The social sciences to which lawyers most frequently turn for enlightenment are economics and political science, the former reflecting our traditional deference to the operation of the market, and the latter our increasing preoccupation with the regulatory apparatus of the State. So far as most lawyers are concerned, the role of that branch of social science that deals specifically with civil society, sociology, is useful mainly for gathering statistical data. Yet there is a case to be made that law would benefit greatly from the insights of sociology, understood in its broad, European sense as the science of the basic phenomena and relationships of society in all its aspects.

This is not to suggest that sociology has a fund of knowledge that has hitherto gone untapped by arrogant social engineers. In fact, when social scientists contemplate the mutually conditioning relations among human development, family structures, law, commerce, and the overall culture, their situation is similar to that of natural scientists trying to make sense of such complex phenomena as the long-range weather or turbulence in fluids. Each contributing factor acts and is acted upon in such complicated ways—or loses its own identity to such an extent—that it is hard to assess the strength, or to predict the influence, of any particular element. Sometimes a minor disturbance at the margins of a system may have ramifications and manifest themselves only at distant times and places. "Chaos" scientists speak of this, half-jokingly, as the butterfly effect—the notion that a butterfly stirring the air today in Beijing may transform storm systems next month in New York.

Social science is similarly unable to tell us much about how to support, reinforce, or even avoid harm to ongoing, evolving, interacting families and communities. What it can offer to us, however, is an alternative way of thinking about the problem. Like Robert Bellah and his colleagues in *Habits of the Heart*, I find it helpful to use the term "ecological" in this connection, because it seems to me that the problems of protecting social environments are comparable in many ways to those of protecting natural environments.

Under contemporary American conditions, an ecological approach to social policy cannot be a simple laissez-faire policy. It would begin by taking communities of memory and mutual aid seriously. It would endeavor to identify and avoid activity that tends to undermine these social subsystems. Recognizing that we know little about what helps or hurts families and other communities, an ecological approach would proceed modestly, preferring local experiments to broad standardized programs. Its aim would be to establish conditions within which communities could flourish in their own way, rather than to attempt to direct the course of their development. Where possible, mediating structures should be preferred to large

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bureaucratic agencies for the delivery of social services. And, just as we have accepted the importance of monitoring and reporting on the impact of certain policies and activities on the balance of nature, we should try to do the same for endangered or fragile social environments.

Because we are not used to thinking this way, it may be worthwhile to spell out the basic elements of the case for more explicit attention to protecting social environments. Mediating groups are essential not only to the healthy development of individuals, but to the optimal functioning of a democratic political regime. They protect individual freedom by countervailing the power of large, impersonal public and private organizations, and by providing a buffer between them and the individual. They are also vital to the health of our collective political enterprise because, as Tocqueville pointed out, they serve as little "schools" where we acquire the habits of cooperation and self-restraint necessary for republican self-government. These habits are all the more necessary in modern societies where a high degree of interdependence among strangers co-exists with an economic system that emphasizes individual profit-maximization and a political system vulnerable to interest-group activity. On a practical level, mediating structures can serve both individuals and the society at large by delivering many essential social services. As the Kauai study showed, they can be a mighty, present help to troubled individuals and families.

IV

There are many indications that we may be approaching an ecological turn in American social policy, especially so far as increased reliance on mediating structures for delivery of social services is concerned. Several of the federal social programs of the 1970s experimented with introducing important roles for local governments and non-governmental organizations as well as participation by the beneficiaries. An even more interesting experiment, however, was the 1981 Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) authorizing grants to public or nonprofit private organizations for services relating to adolescent sexuality and pregnancy. Known to its critics as "the Chastity Act," the AFLA is actually more interesting for its method than its substance. Rather than adopting specific short-term approaches to problems of adolescent sexuality, Congress opted in this Act to authorize a series of grants for research and services directed to the discovery of fundamental causes and long-term remedial measures. Congress identified the following purposes: the promotion of "self-discipline and other prudent approaches to the problem of adolescent premarital sexual relations," the promotion of adoption as an alternative for adolescent parents, the development of new approaches to the delivery of care to pregnant teenage girls, and the support of research and demonstration projects "concerning the societal causes and consequences of adolescent premarital sexual relations, contraceptive use, pregnancy, and child rearing." Grants are not authorized for programs or projects that provide abortions or abortion counseling, or that actively promote abortion, nor for family planning services, unless such services are not otherwise available in the community.

Congress expressly endorsed the view that it was desirable to involve a wide variety of intermediate groups in the project, beginning with the family circle and extending outward to those associations that support families as well as individuals. Not only did the Senate Committee Report expressly acknowledge "the limitations of Government in dealing with a problem that has complex moral and social dimensions," the Act itself affirmatively announced its intent to "emphasize" the role of family members, as well as religious, charitable, and other voluntary associations. Grant applicants are required to describe how families and "religious and charitable organizations, voluntary associations, and other groups in the private sector as well as services provided by publicly sponsored initiatives" will be included in the proposed activities.

Funding under the AFLA went, as Congress intended, to a wide variety of recipients including state and local health agencies, private hospitals, community health associations, privately operated health care centers, and community and charitable organizations, many of them with ties to religious denominations.

In due course, a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the AFLA was brought on the ground that the inclusion of religious organizations among the participants violated the Establishment Clause. In a decision that is encouraging for the mediating-structures approach, the Supreme Court held (5-4) in *Bowen v. Kendrick* that the AFLA is constitutional on its face, remanding the case to the District Court for consideration of whether it had been applied unconstitutionally in specific instances. By holding that the statute did not have an impermissible purpose, that its primary effect was not the advancement of religion, and that it did not require "excessive entanglement" between church and state, the Court sent a signal to the political branches that more creative uses of the structures of civil society (including churches) may now be permissible in the American welfare state.

According to Chief Justice Rehnquist, Congress' 1981 decision to augment the role of religious and other organizations in tackling the social and economic problems caused by teenage pregnancy, sexuality, and parenthood reflected "the entirely appropriate aim of increasing broad-based community involvement. . . ." He went on to say, with respect to religious organizations in particular:

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> Nothing in our previous cases prevents Congress from . . . recognizing the important part that religion or religious organizations may play in resolving certain secular problems. Particularly when, as Congress found, "prevention of adolescent sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy depends primarily upon developing strong family values and close family ties," it seems quite sensible for Congress to recognize that religious organizations can influence values and can have some influence on family life, including parents' relations with their adolescent children.

Reviewing the Court's checkered pattern of church-state decisions, the Chief Justice was able to pick out a few strands of practical reason. He pointed to the "long history of cooperation and interdependency between governments and charitable or religious organizations," and to the fact that the provision of social services by religiously affiliated charitable groups has long taken place without controversy and with community support. He noted that "this Court has never held that religious institutions are disabled by the First Amendment from participating in publicly sponsored social welfare programs."

Justice Blackmun, writing for the dissenters, viewed the adolescent family-life program as involving an unacceptably high risk of "advancing religion at public expense." Nevertheless, even he accepted that it is appropriate for government to support *some* social welfare services provided by religiously affiliated organizations, noting only that "there is a very real and important difference between running a soup kitchen or a hospital, and counseling pregnant teenagers on how to make the difficult decisions facing them."

Another dissenter in the *Kendrick* case, Justice Brennan, has recently gone on record elsewhere as endorsing the importance of intermediate associations. In *Bowen v. Gilliard*, he criticized an AFDC regulation for its excessive intrusion on family relationships, saying:

> In *The Republic* and in *The Laws*, Plato offered a vision of a unified society, where the needs of children are met not by parents but by the Government, and where no intermediate forms of association stand between the individual and the State. The vision is a brilliant one, but it is not our own.

And in *Corporation of the Presiding Bishop v. Amos*, Justice Brennan recognized that the law sometimes must attend to the conditions that communities require in order to flourish. Concurring in a decision upholding the right of a Mormon religious institution to discriminate in favor of its own members in making employment decisions, he said: "Solicitude for a church's ability to [maintain its own definition of itself] reflects the idea that furtherance of the autonomy of religious organizations often furthers individual freedom as well."

It thus seems that, even on our divided Supreme Court, a majority of judges (on both ends of the political spectrum) evince a growing appreciation of intermediate associations, including religious ones. But if there is some such consensus in the abstract, it can dissipate rapidly in specific cases. Though Justice Brennan waxed eloquent about intermediate associations in *Bowen v. Gilliard*, where the majority had given weight to "tradition" in preferring formal to informal family arrangements, he kept his enthusiasm well under wraps in the Adolescent Family Life Act case.

In the future, though, the Court may well reexamine the question of the extent to which church-related organizations may participate in government programs. In an ecological approach to the family and the institutions that support it, the school cases, especially, would benefit from reconsideration. The research of James S. Coleman and his colleagues confirms the finding of the Kauai group that, for a child whose family is weak or broken, a certain kind of school can make a remarkable difference. His most recent study, comparing 1,025 public and Catholic high schools, shows not only that the Catholic schools were more effective overall, but that they were especially beneficial to children from economically disadvantaged homes or where relationships between parents and children were disturbed. The study thus challenges the conventional wisdom that a more demanding school will improve the performance of students who are already performing well, but only at the cost of forcing out poor performers. Coleman's explanation for the success of the Catholic schools with *all* categories of students is that the religious schools have "maintained their community" better than the public schools, providing both parents and students with "social capital." He believes that these results hold for other religion-based schools as well.

With education and other social services, an ecological approach would favor local experiments, such as the pilot projects carried out in the 1960s with income maintenance. At this time there are simply too many unanswered questions to permit the adoption of standardized approaches. Would vouchers improve the ability of the educational system to respond to a broad spectrum of needs? Would they improve the ability of parents to control the education of their children (a right once said by the Supreme Court "to override the desire of the legislature to foster a homogeneous people with American ideals prepared readily to understand current discussions of civic matters")? Would they have the side-effect of aggravating class differences or increasing racial segregation? Or the contrary? Would governmental conditions and supervision attached to government dollars

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undermine the very institutions they are meant to assist? Was John Stuart Mill right when he claimed that education is simply too important to be entrusted to government?

The Adolescent Family Life Act—whatever the merits of its underlying judgments about how to combat the problems associated with teen pregnancy—is an encouraging sign. Like the national labor relations legislation of the 1930s, it represents a significant Congressional effort to find a path between laissez-faire and direct state intervention into social relationships. It differs from the superficially similar "community-based" programs of the 1960s and '70s in significant ways. Like them, it looks to voluntary associations rather than government agencies to carry out a social purpose. But, while the community action programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity set out to "organize" communities, the AFLA contemplates implementation by functioning groups already (if precariously) in place. AFLA works from the bottom up, not the top down. Its express reference to religious organizations and families not only makes this clear, but indicates that a parallel aim, or at least an important by-product, of the legislation is the ecological one of protecting neighborhoods, churches, families, and other small-scale communities as such.

In assessing the legal prospects for mediating structures, I have mentioned the technique employed by Congress in the Adolescent Family Life Act, the receptiveness of the majority of the Supreme Court Justices in *Bowen v. Kendrick* toward that technique, and the openness even of the dissenting Justices to accord weight to the protection of intermediate associations as such under certain circumstances. It seems safe to say that the current Court may be a more hospitable forum for mediating structures than they have had in some time. Another promising sign is the fact that the current head of the executive branch paid eloquent tribute to voluntary associations in his speech accepting the 1988 Republican presidential nomination.

> [W]e are a nation of communities, of thousands and tens of thousands of ethnic, religious, social, business, labor union, neighborhood, regional and other organizations—all of them varied, voluntary, and unique.
>
> This is America: the Knights of Columbus, the Grange, Hadassah, the Disabled American Veterans, the Order of AHEPA (American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association), the Business and Professional Women of America, the union hall, the Bible study group, LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), "Holy Name"—a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky.

It is indicative of the scotoma operating in our collective field of vision that many commentators on the acceptance speech professed themselves to be utterly baffled about what George Bush (or his speechwriter Peggy Noonan) could have meant by the "thousand points of light." In the future, however, the speech may be seen as one element in a social turning point, a sign of the moment when our horizon expanded and when political discourse began to accord serious attention to communities of memory and mutual aid.

Perhaps this apparent increase in attention to families, churches, and other communities will amount to no more than a minor countercurrent in the Great American torrent of individualism and bureaucratization. But it is also possible that it may presage the development of an American third way between the harsh and unrealistic hands-off approach to social problems espoused by many conservatives, and the rigorously secular governmental programs favored by many liberals.

Consider, for example, how the problem of providing day care for preschool children might be approached in the future. At present in the United States, government has remained largely aloof. Thus we have a pretty good idea of what is yielded by the hands-off approach. Too much day care is being provided by persons for whom it is at best just another minimum-wage job, and too many children are simply left alone while the parent or parents work. Yet, if the only alternative is to turn pre-schoolers over to the same people who run the public schools, we seem to be caught between a rock and a hard place. Much more promising is the appearance here and there of day-care centers at the parents' workplace, and day care provided by parishes and temples where it serves the triple purpose of providing meaningful work for members of the community (especially older people), meeting a pressing need of the community's young couples, and beginning the religious education of the community's children. This suggests a role for government, not as a provider, but as a supporter of the provision of day care by persons highly motivated to provide it. This role might be carried out not only by supporting the mediating institutions involved, but also, as in many European countries, by adopting measures that make it easier for a parent to remain at home for the first year or two after a child is born.

There is, of course, a formidable array of obstacles, pitfalls, and difficulties in the way of addressing social needs through expanded public attention and commitment to mediating structures. Some of these have appeared in the recent debates over day-care legislation. One bill would have permitted churches to receive public funds so long as they promised not to offer religious instruction as part of child-care programs. An alternative bill would not have exacted such a promise and would have proceeded through a voucher system. In this and other areas, it is to be expected that policymakers will find it hard to resist the

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temptation to tie government grants to governmental conditions. This entails the risk that the central mission of the recipients will be compromised, or appropriated for government purposes. Then, too, mediating structures, like other human institutions, are susceptible to corruption and abuse of power. There have been times and places where they became exceedingly powerful and oppressive. But under contemporary American circumstances, it is their very weakness that is a matter for concern.

V

In this essay I have argued for greater legal attention to the spontaneous institutions of civil society. I have noted instances of a dawning appreciation in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the social value and the unexplored potential of mediating structures. At the same time, however, I have called attention to the difficulty of trying to work out an "ecological" approach to social policy when we, like the chaos scientists, know so little about how to predict and influence long-term developments. It is much easier to experiment with delivery of basic social services by mediating groups than to discern what might be done to promote the health of such groups, or of smaller, primary groups that compose the "fine texture" of society.

So the basic problem is one of setting conditions, or to put it another way, of shifting probabilities. What little we know about how law affects and is affected by other social subsystems and the culture as a whole suggests that we should not hold exaggerated expectations of what law can accomplish on its own in this respect. But this is not to say that we should underestimate the potential of the law to influence, and sometimes to increase, the power of social trends. This observation, of course, brings us to the much-debated subject of the relation of law and morality and the conundrum of the common good in a pluralistic society. By accepting from Austin and Holmes an overly sharp distinction between law and morality, by largely abandoning the search for the common good, and by permitting individual liberty or equality to trump most other values, mainstream American law may have had a part in fostering a set of cultural conditions inhospitable to communities of memory and mutual aid. For law contributes in its own way to cultural schemes of meaning. This is what renders illusory and somewhat dangerous the notion that law can be completely neutral.

It may be that in a democratic, pluralistic nation, we must settle for what William Sullivan has called an "intermediate, political" conception of the common good as setting conditions for ongoing, potentially self-correcting, social discourse. A notion of the common good as fostering political dialogue and deliberation about the values for the sake of which we participate in civic life, in turn, would require attention to those groups within which we develop the capacity for such deliberation: families, neighborhoods, townships, workplace associations, and other communities of memory and mutual aid.

VI

This paper presents an approach to social and legal policy that would combine many concerns of both liberals and conservatives, that would work patiently toward long-range goals, that would embrace a dialogical notion of the common good, and that would seek to promote the general welfare by attending to the conditions under which individuals, families, and communities prosper. Like the analogous problems of protecting the air and water, this approach would require both a certain sense of the long run and a certain willingness to sacrifice, neither of which is easy to marshal in modern society. As in the case of natural ecological systems, the possibility exists that the task is beyond the capacity of law and government to affect for the better. If, in fact, our societies are producing too many individuals who are capable neither of effective participation in civic life nor of sustaining personal relationships, it is probably not within the power of law to reverse the process.

Nathan Glazer has recently written:

> [There is much to be said both] for the insistence on a radical and egalitarian individualism, and for the defense of complex institutions and social bonds. . . . But if the first side wins out, as it is doing, the hope that social policy will assist in creating more harmonious social relations, better-working social institutions broadly accepted as the decent and right way to order society, cannot be realized.

It may be, however, that one reason that "radical and egalitarian individualism" often appears to be "winning out" is that it so thoroughly permeates that part of American law, constitutional law, where we tell the story about what kind of people we think we are. But as we have seen, the legal picture is becoming more nuanced. The legal system may, in fact, be in the process of correcting for an earlier over-emphasis on individual rights. It may also be the case that the individualism of our legal system is more thoroughgoing than that which exists in our culture. Though Robert Bellah and his coauthors found that the "first language" of Americans is the discourse of individualism, they also heard Americans across the country speaking communitarian "second languages," languages of "tradition and commitment in communities of memory." It is true that individuals in modern societies have been emancipated from group and family ties to an historically unprecedented degree, but it is also the case that most men and women still spend most of their lives in emotionally and econom-

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ically interdependent households, and that government still depends largely on non-governmental organizations to care for the weak and dependent.

As mentioned earlier, unprecedented demographic changes beginning in the 1960s have put families, communities, and governments alike under great stress. The situation has been well summarized by the French demographer Louis Roussel:

> It is rare in the history of populations that sudden changes appear simultaneously across the entire set of demographic indicators. More often, change appears first in one area and then with time, a general adjustment takes place, establishing a new equilibrium. Thus, for example, the decline of the death rate in the eighteenth century progressively entailed a general transformation of individual behavior and the relations between generations. What we have seen between 1965 and the present, among the billion or so people who inhabit the industrialized nations, is, by contrast, a general upheaval in the whole set of demographic indicators.
>
> In barely twenty years, the birth rate and the marriage rate have tumbled, while divorces and illegitimate births have increased rapidly. All these changes have been substantial, with increases or decreases of more than fifty percent. They have also been sudden, since the process of change has only lasted about fifteen years. And they have been general, because all industrialized countries have been affected beginning around 1965.

These demographic upheavals both reflected and promoted still more fundamental changes that have taken place in the meanings people attribute to personal and family relations, to work, and to life itself.

Writing of the intellectual turmoil and the breakdown of certainties that attend such a period of cultural crisis, the theologian Bernard Lonergan predicted:

> There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made. . . .

This essay has noted many signs that the American center is making its voice heard. In the process of painstakingly working out the transitions from the old to the new, American heterogeneity may turn out to be a strength, rather than an impediment. Those very features that have made us different from other advanced welfare states, that have even made us seem "backward" at times—the variety of our racial and ethnic groups, the opportunities for creative innovation and experimentation inherent in our sort of federalism, our tradition of voluntarism, and even, within bounds, our attachment to a gambling, risk-taking, profit-making economy—may turn out to be conducive to the implementation of an ecological approach to social policy. FT

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The Crisis of the West: Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the Imperative of Salvation

William E. Johnston, Jr.

What is the crisis of the West? In some cases the sense of this frequently asked if daunting question may be quite specific. It may refer, say, to an economic crisis: trade deficits, foreign indebtedness, or the collapse of the Third World. If something is not done immediately to cure this problem—eminently curable, whatever it may be, we will normally be told—we are all lost. But occasionally the point is larger and the phrase is intended to call to mind a fundamental crisis of the Western spirit. When this is the point of the question, the sense is often that the West has lost its resolve, that there is a spiritual meaningless unique to our time and place. It is in this larger sense that the question is taken up here.

The purpose of this essay is not to examine this sensitivity to crisis in a historical sense—as declining and falling according to definable historical circumstance—but instead to suggest that the recurring sense of crisis is in fact quite old in the West, that it is an ever-renewing version of the crisis of salvation evident most explosively in early Christianity and, derivatively, in the political philosophers of modernity, Machiavelli and Rousseau. The crisis of modernity, I will argue, is the Christian problem of salvation reinterpreted and transformed by the anti-Christian intellectual absorption, at the start of modernity, of salvation as the most serious *political* problem requiring solution, both in theory and practice.

This redefinition on new grounds of an old imperative uniquely reconstituted the spiritual energies of our civilization and represents a momentous turning point in world history. In his "Preface" to *Will and Political Legitimacy: A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel,* Patrick Riley writes, "Descartes, as a Christian, worried about creation in a way that Plato did not: the *Timaeus* is less agitated than the *Response to the Six Objectives* because salvation is not at stake." Note well that phrase: "because salvation is not at stake." Christianity unavoidably poses the question of salvation: How shall we be saved? Our present task is to explore the relationship of this problem or imperative to the seemingly permanent sense of crisis that afflicts Western society—that perhaps not just "afflicts" Western society but *defines* it.

I

Edmund Wilson in *The Shores of Light* recalls his teacher Christian Gauss' dramatic emphasis of, in Wilson's words, "the moment, almost as momentous as that of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, when Jean-Jacques, then thirty-seven, was walking from Paris to Vincennes, where he was going to see Diderot in prison, and happened to read the announcement that the Academy of Dijon was offering a prize for the best essay on the question, 'Has the progress of the arts and sciences contributed to corrupt or to

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purify society?'"

Obviously the point Wilson suggests rhetorically in his parallel is that Rousseau's thought and Pauline Christianity (he may mean Christianity as such) have had much the same "momentous" impact. They each have transformed the world, Christianity the ancient world, Rousseau's thought the modern. But the point has to be taken further, for the radicality of Christianity is compounded by the addition of Rousseau's analysis. That analysis was thought out from within Christian society, in reaction to it. Rousseau's assessment of his Christian world echoes the Christian critique of its non-Christian world. Both too are committed to a kind of conversion of the mind. They both wish to convince men and women that civilization is radically defective, and to convert them to the truth regarding its cure. The point of each is to separate humans from the world according to a reading of "nature," the "true" nature of human things, convincing men and women that they can have no natural home in the corrupt world. Finally, both were prompted by moments of extraordinary personal revelation.

Rousseau was an inheritor in several senses. He inherited the radical critique of society that was explicit in Christianity as well as the radical reaction to Christianity explicit in Machiavelli and the subsequent critics of Christian practice and spirituality. Thus informed, Rousseau sought to show that man's movement from natural animal to civilized man was a corruption and downfall calling for the most thoroughgoing of reconstructive measures. Christianity had been no less radical, no less convinced of human corruption and degradation. Indeed, it is even more radical in that it proposes that there is no possible human reconstruction that can reconcile mankind to the world. No reconciliation can occur but by the grace of God. Rousseau followed the outline of the Christian critique of civilized existence, but took this problem of reconciliation as his own—as against, ironically, a Christianized society. He hoped to achieve by secular means what Christianity allowed only to God's worldly intervention.

Rousseau's ambition in this regard extends Machiavelli's. Machiavelli had objected to Christianity and its society even as he replicated much of the Christian critique of worldly things. As Rousseau would do later, Machiavelli took Christianity as his enemy precisely because of its enmity to human power even as it exercised that power to shape and reshape Machiavelli's own world. Machiavelli sought to show men and women how to save themselves without waiting on God. The issue of salvation had been posed to Machiavelli most starkly by the Christian spiritual imperative and by the Church's obvious political imperative. The issue then is the extent to which both Machiavelli and Rousseau were influenced by the doubled-edged crisis of salvation inherited from Christianity.

Consider how closely Rousseau follows the Christian critique:

Christianity	**Rousseau**
1. Paradise/Garden of Eden: innocent and free	State of nature: good & free
2. "Sin"—disobedience to God	"Fatal accident" [*Second Discourse*]
3. Corruption	Decay and degeneration
4. Human pride (the vanity and hypocrisy of the "Pharisees")	"Vain curiosity," "vain sciences," "vain studies" [*First Discourse*]
5. Man was created without sin and everywhere lives in sin	"Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains" [*Social Contract*]
6. No human government can save	No government is legitimate
7. What can save?	What can make legitimate?
8. God's will in Christ	"General will" of people [*Social Contract*]

Rousseau secularizes the spiritual critique of human society left to him by Christianity. But he proposes a way of saving humans by purely conventional or political means, taking up the practical challenge posed by the political example of the Church's own claims to rule. Like Machiavelli before him, he takes over the Christian program to save the world, transforming it into a program of strictly political salvation. Unlike Machiavelli, however, he inherits his own age's condemnation of the Church's claim to political legitimacy, a condemnation influenced by Machiavelli's earlier critique. The "chains" of that Christian world's claim to rule were widely considered illegitimate to Rousseau's post-Reformation audience; Rousseau would extend the charge of illegitimacy to its farthest reach, to all existing governments, sacred or secular.

The precedent of Machiavelli is important. According to Harvey Mansfield, Jr., in *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders,* Machiavelli "politicized Christianity." Machiavelli "must explain religion, in particular the Christian religion, naturally." By Mansfield's account, the virtue of Machiavelli's politicizing interpretation is that it understands Christianity as a kind of natural phenomenon. As Mansfield adds, "Understood naturally, it [Christianity] can be understood politically. . . ." Mansfield explains Machiavelli's purpose in these words:

> The Christian sect has shown men how to acquire the world for themselves, but as something despicable like the corrupting acquisitions of

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> external provinces by the Romans. . . . It has revealed the potential power of man to unify the human generation and capture the world. To be actualized, this *potenza* requires that the human generation be understood as a mixed body in Machiavelli's sense of matter endowed with the spirit of self-defense, thus republicanized.

Christianity "republicanized" or politicized becomes simply another form of human acquisition. So too for Rousseau. What then is left to do is what Rousseau takes as his project, to acquire *legitimate* sovereignty for human government. All extant claims to sovereignty, including the Church's, are illegitimate: humans must re-acquire a lawful version of the natural freedom they have lost by entering an "illegal" society. And all societies, including the Church's, are illegal. They are not based on a law man has given to himself, which to Rousseau (and after him, to Kant) was the crucial point. Both Machiavelli and Rousseau wish to "naturalize" (that is, politicize in their special senses) the human phenomena that they believe have become unnatural (depoliticized) within a Christianized society even as that Christian society itself moved to acquire the world it renounced.

Though anti-Christian, the basis of Rousseau's critique is the Christian problem intellectually reformulated to a new political purpose: a self-perfecting human vanity has led to the loss of freedom. We may understand this more clearly by considering the Christian conception of freedom and the dilemma such freedom poses for human existence, a dilemma that Rousseau, and Machiavelli before him, had to confront. We can best do this, for our purposes here, by drawing on distinctions Hans Jonas makes in his *Philosophical Essays*, in a remarkable piece entitled "The Abyss of the Will: Philosophical Meditation on the Seventh Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans." Jonas meditates on the foundational Christian text, Romans 7:18-19: "For willing what is right is in my power, but doing it is not. For I do not perform the good which I will, but the evil I will not, that I do."

For the Christian, freedom is a trap inescapably opened by the nature of human consciousness; it is therefore a snare endemic to human existence. Freedom is constituted by an unavoidable quandary—at least not avoidable by human means—of willing right and doing wrong. There can be no escape for the Christian (and, the Christian contends, for all humans) but that path offered by the cross. Since the cross is the dividing point of human existence—on one side sin, on the other salvation—freedom cannot be the most important objective for the Christian. Freedom is the condition from which the Christian would escape by accepting the cross. The Christian cannot be saved by his own deed, at least according to Paul in the text cited by Jonas. The law, both human and divine, avails us nothing but entrapment in sin and knowledge of sin; our knowledge is a kind of sin itself. Human freedom leads invariably to sin and evil; the law announces this. The law makes its followers illegitimate, its followers unfree in the midst of their freedom. The problem is to make legitimacy without resort to self-entrapping law. The self-condemning reflexivity of the law must be escaped.

The Pauline text calls our attention to this abyss of self-subjectivity, what Jonas describes as "oscillating reflexivity." In Jonas' words, human freedom "cannot resist its own possibilities." He goes on to explain:

> Freedom even when successful in abstaining from unethical outward "work" encounters in the ownmost sphere of its self-grounding this inward possibility of itself which always lies in wait and claims its mental enactment; and the fact that here, within the mind, the mere thought is the act, and the possibility to think it is necessity to think it, and willing not to think it means to have already thought it, and not-having-thought-it may be concealing it, and concealing it may be its most suspicious presence: this labyrinthine structure of subjectivity per se makes the self-temptation irresistible to freedom in its helpless dealing with itself.

The Christian wills the right but has no power of his own to do the right; human freedom is helpless in dealing with itself. For the Christian, therefore, there can be no political right apart from the cross. He must make himself subject to God if he is to find peace. There is only one path to God, according to Paul, that of the cross of Christ, the one he discovered on the road to Damascus.

These thoughts, suggested by Hans Jonas' reflections on the existential significance of Paul's teaching about the trap of human freedom, find their precedent in certain passages from Rousseau—for Rousseau too had meditated on Paul's epistles. For instance, from the *Second Discourse*:

> . . . it is not so much understanding which constitutes the distinction of man among the animals as it is his being a free agent. Nature commands every animal, and the beast obeys. Man feels the same impetus, but he realizes that he is free to acquiesce or resist; and it is above all in the consciousness of his freedom that the spirituality of his soul is shown.

But it is the very spirituality of his soul that leads man into the existential trap disclosed by Christianity, the tempting trap of vain self-perfection and unremitting desire for salvation. Rousseau defines the human problem as Christians understood it, as the crisis of the self-corrupting conscience. Vanity, the sin of human pride, was a "sin" against man as well as or quite apart from its being a sin against God.

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Rousseau sought to demonstrate a way out of the Christian bind that did not rely on the Christian solution; indeed, it might be more accurate to say that he felt he had to solve this problem despite the weight of the proffered Christian solution. The Christian mode of salvation was not legitimate because it only compounded the problem. Christianity itself was a measure of human vanity and the grasping for self-perfection, and as such formed just another link in the chain that bound men in a self-imposed slavery. Another basis for legitimacy, equally self-imposed, but deliberately so, had to be established.

Why was the Christian solution illegitimate? As for Machiavelli, the Christian persuasion was for Rousseau a product of corrupt society. The spirituality of man's soul had a "natural" history prior to that recorded by Christianized civilization. Christianity supposes men unhappy apart from God. Rousseau supposed men happy by nature, that is, when they were alone, isolated, with no awareness or consciousness of others and no worry about being apart from God. Men had no natural awareness of God and therefore no natural awareness of sin. By reading this prehistory, Rousseau believed that he had discovered that nature and human nature were good even when God or the knowledge of God was not at all evident. Nature was good to humans and good for them. Nature was pre-moral or amoral; it had a goodness that preceded all morality as it preceded all society, *for it preceded the consciousness implicit in human freedom*. Rousseau's objective became to return to that amoral goodness as the standard of right in an immoral world, a world made more base by the Christian consciousness of the sinful self.

The extreme romanticism of Rousseau's naturalism is like Machiavelli's extreme realism in that his "good" has no moral content, his "right" is judged by no moral standard higher than itself. Consider this passage from the *Second Discourse*:

> In a word, every man [in "the true state of nature"] seeing his fellow-men hardly otherwise than he would see animals of another species, can carry off the prey of the weaker or relinquish his own to the stronger, without considering these plunderings as anything but natural events, without the slightest emotion of insolence or spite, and with no other passion than the sadness or joy of a good or bad outcome.

Rousseau adds: "It seems at first that men in that state, not having among themselves any kind of moral relationship or known duties, could be neither good nor evil. . . ."

Goodness or badness is here not self-reflexive, not moral. The only sentiment tempering natural dispassion at natural events is held by Rousseau to be a kind of pity, itself only a "gentle voice," which teaches—or rather inspires, for there is no teaching, no learning in Rousseau's state of nature—men to follow the unchristian "maxim of natural goodness": "Do what is good for you with the least possible harm to others." The maxim of natural goodness is said to be of more utility than Christianity's golden rule.

For Rousseau, the first stirrings of pride among men—their awareness of themselves in self-regarding tension with others—are the beginnings of human corruption and, as such, are the first revolutionary disruptions transforming the state of nature into a state of property, reputation, and power. Individual pride, which becomes overweening the more it is civilized, must be made general, not specific, in order to reclaim the soul's natural (unthinking) peace with itself. It must also be "generalized" so as not to distemper the state's political sovereignty, the only legitimizing path away from the corruption of the individual self.

As Rousseau contends in the *Social Contract,* only radical generalization—the complete alienation of the private self to the public good, the particular to the general—can recover the integrity of the isolated, solitary state of nature where there was no moral consciousness of an "I" set against others. Human conventions can be made legitimate only according to the standard of right supplied by Rousseau's reading of the rights of the state of nature: "Do what is good for you . . ."—"without the slightest emotion of insolence or spite, and with no other passion than the sadness or joy of a good or bad outcome." By alienating all of one's self unreservedly to the social whole, one becomes innocent again, almost as in the amoral innocence of the state of nature, "neither good nor evil." One gives up one's proud, corrupt self as the locus of moral discrimination in favor of a transcending, ennobling sovereign social power of one's own creation; and one does this *equally* with all others.

The meaning of freedom is transformed as well. One was free in the state of nature, but completely subject to its natural imperatives. So too with the new sovereign. Complete obedience to the general will re-establishes by convention (that is, by legitimate or moral means) the uncorrupted equality in the state of nature. The morality of politics is thus something agreed to in the social contract, as a matter of convention to which all are subject equally. Morality is a matter of agreement; there is no natural right or wrong that one should respect independently of what one finds good for oneself. The moral sovereign is an artificial or conventional whole to which all will owe full, unremitting allegiance. As Rousseau concedes, one must be "forced to be free" under these new conditions: one is obliged to obey the civil law one has given oneself in the general will. Obedience becomes the meaning of freedom. As Rousseau puts

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it in the *Social Contract,* "Obedience to the law one has prescribed for oneself is freedom."

II

For Machiavelli, too, the point was to return to an amoral nature to reconstruct morality on new grounds, but his nature was not one of peace. War was Machiavelli's state of nature, a condition of necessity wherein the Christian God was simply another "natural" phenomenon engineered by human beings interested in their aggrandizement. As Harvey Mansfield reminds us in his introduction to Machiavelli's *The Prince,* God appears for Machiavelli—if He can be said to appear at all—only as the great teacher of worldly prudence, that is, as the great teacher of how to use one's own arms to acquire. Machiavelli speaks of "Moses, who had so great a teacher." This is God politicized and then conveniently set aside in favor of a new teacher and teaching, embraced in one's arms only as an edifying armor amidst the war of worldly contests and to be exchanged for new, more edifying armor as circumstances dictate.

The function of God is taken up by men, their arms free of the need to embrace but not to grasp. The problem of salvation remains, but it is put in exclusively human hands; man governs himself by his own arms, according to Machiavelli. As Harvey Mansfield has pointed out, by the end of *The Prince,* the equation having consequence is fortune and human virtue, not fortune, God's providence, and human prudence. God's place in the order of things is taken by desanctified human agency. Having accomplished this reduction, Machiavelli is then in position to redefine the meaning of sin as well as the meaning of good and virtue. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Machiavelli gets us to agree with his new meanings for sin, good, and virtue by arguing so subtly that we don't notice until it is too late that God has disappeared from the human scene as politicized by Machiavelli—covered over by human arms—and that our understandings of evil, of good, and of virtue have been radically transformed.

Being politicized, Machiavelli's version of salvation, like Rousseau's, has more to do with the state than with the individual soul, the political state of the individual's soul. The latter is politicized following the example of the Christian individual's incorporation within an institutional church operating according to worldly or natural priorities in a corrupt, sinful world that needs saving. The two points of contention—the individual and the state—meet in the problem of ruling securely one's sphere in an unfriendly world. Specifically for Machiavelli, it is not necessary to be morally right; it is instead right (i.e., effective) to live according to necessity, that which is necessary to save one's life or "state." Humans can save themselves from disaster only if they see themselves fighting the unfriendly regime of an expanded, all-embracing, and forever dangerous necessity, and act accordingly.

The ruler is advised that "it is necessary for him to be so prudent as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices that would take his state from him." The "state" is ambiguously doubled, at once a political possession and also a physical life. The ruler is told: "one should not care about incurring the reputation of those vices without which it is difficult to *save one's state*; for if one considers everything well, one will find something appears to be virtue, which if pursued would be one's ruin, and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in one's security and well-being." Or as Rousseau would later teach: "Do what is good for you with the least possible harm to others." Needless to say, what is good for you may not be what is good simply, and what harms others is of secondary or non-moral consideration. The degree of harm one does to others is a matter of what best secures oneself, one's state.

Machiavelli deliberately broadens the realm of necessity, the realm of crisis, in order to emphasize the extremes necessary "to save one's state"—to obtain political salvation. And salvation is a political condition, not a religious one. The state of one's soul apart from the state it is in in this world is not the point; it is the state of one's condition in the world that is at issue, for it is only in the present that one can secure one's self and one's state. One's status in the present is the enduring question. Prudence is doing intelligently what is necessary to save one's own self by one's own arms. We are advised to husband our resources in order to subdue the wife that is necessity. And we are permanently married to necessity; there is no divorce in Machiavelli's reconstituted state. It is not surprising, then, that Machiavelli sees murder as perfectly good when appropriate or necessary.

Virtue in Machiavelli becomes a double-sided meanness; a preoccupation with means and an acceptance of cruelty. The worst condition imaginable is to be under the regime of necessity without means and meanness of one's own. "For there is no proportion between one who is armed and one who is unarmed." Because men are wicked, a sentiment with which Rousseau agrees, it is necessary in order to save one's skin or state to be wicked with astuteness. "Therefore it is necessary for a prince to know well how to use the beast and the man. . . . And if all men were good, this teaching would not be good." Since men are *not* good, it is good to be beastly on occasion, as necessity dictates; and since it is necessity which dictates, there is no moral problem encountered by acting as one must.

As with Rousseau later, Machiavelli gives us a new innocence beyond good and evil. It is a satisfying wisdom. The teaching that teaches this new non-moral good is itself obviously good to know; it is exceedingly useful. As good in this new sense, it constitutes its own non-moral morality. To save one's self in a wicked

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world, one must learn how to be intelligently and bravely wicked. One learns this from Machiavelli, who is therefore a good teacher of what is good, timely wickedness. Wickedness is something to be grasped, not spurned, when the situation calls for it, and avoided only if the situation does not call for it, not avoided because wickedness is immoral. As Machiavelli shows, the situation will sooner or later call for it. Human salvation requires astutely applied doses of savagery. What can be said to be *required* is beyond moral objection.

Machiavelli, like Rousseau, returns us to a nature naked of morality. Morality is all the more visible in Machiavelli for its expedient absences; it becomes purely a matter of style, worn only for its practical impact, put on or taken off as the rhetorical case demands. The moral or good thing for men to do if they are to save themselves is to out-fox the vagaries of nature by beating her to the punch. "I judge this indeed, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down." In the realm of necessity—which is paradoxically Machiavelli's realm of freedom, men being free to do what they must—salvation consists in "acting against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion" when "the winds of fortune and variations of things command" it. Evil is not evil when our salvation requires it; it is good.

Machiavelli was in the habit of pointing to persuasive historical models (examples or "modes") to confirm his points. What was the most persuasive contemporary model for Machiavelli, and the opponent he must defeat if Machiavellianism, with its desire to acquire this world, can succeed? It is his arch-enemy, Christianity. To defeat Christianity, Machiavelli must demonstrate that Christianity is in fact Machiavellian. The battle is won if Christianity can be shown, in the testimony of its own deeds, to teach his own lesson—that evil is not evil when salvation requires it. That the battle was won can be seen in this passage from Rousseau's *Social Contract*:

> Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom on earth. . . . Now since this new idea of an otherworldly kingdom could never be understood by the pagans, they always regarded the Christians as true rebels who, beneath a hypocritical submissiveness, were only awaiting the moment to become independent and the masters, and to usurp adroitly the authority they pretended to respect out of weakness. . . . What the pagans feared happened. Then everything took on a different appearance, the humble Christians changed their language, and soon this supposedly otherworldly kingdom was seen to become, under a visible leader, the most violent despotism in this world.

Christianity Machiavellianized is based on the proposition that killing the Son of God was the necessary path to human salvation. What is necessary to save is right or virtuous. Christianity seems by this reasoning to reveal that God himself was Machiavellian: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be destroyed but may have everlasting life. For God did not send his son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world could be saved through him." (John 3:16ff; Richard Lattimore's translation) As Machiavelli would say, the world is redeemed by means of a timely murder sanctioned by God. God teaches the wisdom of God's own execution. In order to acquire the allegiance of men, God too uses his own arms in the person of his own son—and the arms of the Church—to redeem the world.

Machiavelli's ruler, whether the prince or the people, also loves the world; he desires it so much that he wishes to acquire it as his own, using his own arms. Like Christ, in this perverse way, he puts judgment aside in favor of acquisition (that is, salvation). God, Machiavelli could say, citing Scripture, does not judge the world; he saves it for Himself, and by whatever means are necessary. Judgment (justice) exists henceforth only as an expeditious means to acquisition (power).

The Christianity of this world is Machiavelli's great rival but also his great model. Christianity's Church presents the most commanding counterclaim for redeeming the world, and it does so behind the mask (robes) of sacred otherworldliness. Machiavelli, too, masks his own politics, after a fashion. His politics is presented in the name of a saving patriotism. *The Prince* concludes with these words: "Thus, one should not let this opportunity pass, for Italy after so much time, *to see her redeemer*" (emphasis added). The crisis is at hand, as it always is with Machiavelli's salvific politics. Italy's redeemer will not be a Christian by faith; he will be a Machiavellian "Christian" in practice. He will redeem Italy with his own arms and in the process defeat Christianity by out-acquiring the Church. But to be persuaded by Machiavelli that evil is not evil when it saves us, and that Christianity is only the worldly acquisitions of the Church, is already to be deprived of moral bearings beyond those which Machiavelli defines as virtuous, the success of one's own arms. Machiavelli seeks to debase Christianity by showing that it is finally just another, inferior brand of Machiavellianism.

Rousseau's views, I have tried to show, jibe with Machiavelli's. The *Social Contract* ends with a critique of Christianity nearly as withering as Machiavelli's own, only to adopt an intolerance of un-civil religious faiths as withering as Christianity's own—for the noblest of civic purposes, of course. Rousseau seeks to establish a tolerance of civil or political intolerance, to erect, in effect, a civil religion that out-politicizes Christianity but appears to be more tolerant—to a

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point. Violation of Rousseau's "sentiments of sociability," the tenets of "a good citizen or a faithful subject," or what he also calls his "dogmas of the civil religion," will be punished with banishment or death.

III

My point has been to suggest that both Machiavelli and Rousseau define the human dilemma as the problem of salvation. In this, I have argued, they perversely follow Christianity while separating themselves from it. What was formerly a religious problem with political implications becomes for them a political problem with religious implications. The Christian ecclesiastical imperative of salvation at all costs, in a world in crisis, is transformed by their thought into the originating impetus of modernity's search for secular salvation. The Christian redemption of the world from itself becomes in their critiques a radical rejection of Christianity's depreciation of the world, in the name of another, rival redemption of the world. Christianity, according to them, slandered human integrity even as it exploited politically the power of that integrity.

Human integrity can be saved from the Christian slander and from the vain foolishness of human freedom by readapting the Christian insight into that freedom and by adopting the Christian method, the redefining of what is saving for humans. The new good justifies a new "unnatural" practice in the name of a reinterpreted understanding of nature, and requires the establishment of a new "unnatural" order based on a nature more rigorously understood, that is, without reference to what is higher than human beings or moral, and without regard, finally, for human freedom itself. It is not surprising that efforts to save the integrity of human beings by purely human means end by relinquishing all natural restraints, encouraging banishment, and praising executions, as both Rousseau and Machiavelli do.

Christianity had taught that the nature of the human problem was the need to be saved from the nature of human beings. Rousseau and Machiavelli did not quarrel with this objective, the need to be saved from human weakness and corruption, only with the rationale; it was not from nature but to nature, correctly reinterpreted by their lights, that the path of salvation should take. They sought to re-naturalize human society in order to save it from the unnatural fate which they believed had overcome it under the all-too-human siege of an unnatural (and anti-human) Christianity. The process of re-naturalization was intensely political, as rulership of human society was at stake: salvation lay only in human hands and heads. Salvation is for them a political process, not a religious path. It is through this reasoning—irresistibly absorbed by it as we are—that we came to face a permanent sense of crisis in the West. In our age more than in theirs, we tend to think, everything is at risk; our time teaches us that only we can save ourselves, and that save ourselves we must—from ourselves. We too seek a liberated political theology: liberated from the corruption of human things, politicized by the justice of human sovereignty, theologized by the Christian urgency to save every human life, by the cross if necessary.

Since we in the West are all more or less Machiavellian and have all tasted of the cup poured so masterfully by Rousseau, being double inheritors, first of Christianity and then of the radical reaction to Christianity, many are tempted to go behind Christianity, to try to see what existed prior to its radically transforming effects. They seek hesitantly a pre-Christian perspective in order to understand modernity's crisis of salvation according to a non-Machiavellian, non-Rousseauean, and non-Christian standard. For some, this has meant a return to Greek political philosophy. For others it may mean a reconsideration of what existed prior to Christianity but was, for many, covered over by it—that is, a reconsideration of Judaism.

In taking this latter route, they may, for instance, consider what can be learned of human pride from the record of Genesis. From this pre-Christian perspective, it would seem to have been imprudent of God in His effort to redeem Israel—not the world—to have sent His son to death on a cross. Surely the Lord of creation would have known how such an action might be misinterpreted by such vain creatures as those He created in the beginning as He did. By acting after the Christian fashion—if in fact He did—He rather severely raised the stakes in the human drama, not to mention the expectations. In effect, He was saying that His creation was not good enough, His law was not wise enough. Something extreme was necessary to save the human things: make a man God.

Considering this, those doing the reconsidering may argue further—if we may continue this line of thought—that the Lord did not send His son to death in order to conquer (in resurrection) an unconquerable death and that Christianity is a misinterpretation of God's will and a misunderstanding of His desires for human beings. Christianity might from this pre-Christian perspective simply represent—no, not simply, for there is nothing simple about it—an effort by some of those beings to get around the difficulties posed to them by God's law and the idea of law as such. If so, then Machiavelli's and Rousseau's radical extensions of the imperative of salvation bequeathed to them by Christianity are misappropriations of a misinterpretation. The crisis of the West, the crisis of salvation, they could further contend, may rest on successive intellectual errors that have at each stage been radically politicized. The universalization of the Christian message is usually taken to be its great strength; it may rather be evidence of its extreme immoderation.

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Clearly, this way of proceeding is fraught with difficulties, especially in a Christian world educated by Machiavelli and Rousseau. How may we get beyond what we irresistibly are? Are not those of us in the West invariably drawn to dramas of salvation, to Machiavellian impetuosity, to forcing people to be free? And the true Christians among us might well reply that immoderation is exactly to the point when the point is to save the world. Must not the world be saved?

It may yet be the case that if there is indeed a crisis of the West from which we need to be saved, we may more accurately understand it as a crisis caused by the need to be saved from the extreme sense that we need to be saved. The world may in fact not need saving, at least not need *our* saving; it may benefit more from our moderation. As Edward Shils has written, "There is no permanent solution to any important problem in human life." It remains an open question whether it is in our power to save the world or to save ourselves in any permanent sense.

Difficult as it may seem given the foregoing analysis, rediscovering ourselves and our world apart from the imperatives of a secularized Christian salvation, and apart also from the modern exaggerations of that salvation evident in the thought of Machiavelli and Rousseau, may yet open a prudent path through our ever-present difficulties. If it is not a path of final salvation in the sense of securing those permanent solutions not available to us, then it can nevertheless be one of considerable courage and honesty. This conclusion may strike readers as an anti-climatic note on which to end—and that is exactly my point. FT

THE SHADOWS

Easy to forget, how shadows
are light's creatures, out of dark,
out of thinning dark come
delicately, then sharply. Sun puts them there.

True to the last frond, bole, blowing
crest, bush's perimeter,
by light shaped from darkness
their elegant black duplications
silent, accurate.

On the hot grass, featureless
the woman's shadow, and the bird's
in its swift shadow-passage.
Nothing so poor it lacks its dark
companion.

Four senses cannot catch them. Try
to touch one, and touch wood, grass,
or skin; try to hear, and hear
only all sounds. Try to bring
one to your lip.

Or try for fragrance. No, only
sight, just the incredulous eye
deserted by its fellows, can stare
into that dark mirror which
is a shadow.

Strange: the ultimate shadow
cut from imagination, cannot cast
itself across a somber slope.
By which it follows that the valley
requires brightness.

Josephine Jacobsen

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Review Essay

The Psychology of Altruism

James W. Fowler

In his 1987 book *Hope Within History,* Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann argues that when people are in situations like that of the ancient Hebrews under Babylonian captivity, where an overwhelmingly powerful majority holds seemingly complete and brutal sway over an oppressed minority, the latter must have recourse to the "public processing of pain." This strategy involves refusal to collude with the oppressor by hiding the consequences of oppression out of shame or "identification with the aggressor." It means public lament; it means public display of those who have been wounded by the regime; it means mirroring, in every way possible, the features of oppression, so as to undermine the veneer of religious and civil legitimation masking the regime's systemic brutality.

With *The Altruistic Personality,* Samuel P. and Pearl M. Oliner have sought to reveal the contours and character of an underside of the Holocaust that often remains suppressed. They have undertaken a penetrating study of the developmental social psychology of *altruism.* It is hard to avoid recognizing that this research project, and the book resulting from it, have motivational rootage that extends close to the hearts of the authors.

In the book's introduction, Samuel Oliner tells part of his story. As a Polish-Jewish lad of twelve, in the summer of 1942, he witnessed the brutal liquidation of the Bobowa Ghetto. While he waited his turn to be thrust onto the trucks that had already taken most of his family to an unknown destination, his grandmother fiercely told him in Yiddish, "Run away so that you will stay alive!" His escape made him perhaps the only survivor of Bobowa. Through the adroit kindness of a Polish peasant woman with whom his father had done business, he took a new identity, learned enough catechism to "pass," and was guided to a small farm where he could be a helper to a childless couple. He survived. The only other members of his family who survived were a cousin and his wife, who had been hidden for three years by a Polish peasant family. These folk shared their meager food and showed them all manner of kindness. Oliner remembered the kindness of Balwina, the peasant farm woman, and the family who sheltered his cousin.

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The Oliners have carried out a careful, multidimensional inquiry into the origins and motives of "rescuers"—non-Jews who, at risk to themselves and their families, and for no gain or reward, tried to provide aid, comfort, and protection to Jews threatened by the terror of the Nazi "final solution." Their study examines rescue activities in each of the countries of Europe that experienced occupation by the Germans. Part of the book's immense value is the historical chapter by Lawrence Baron that marshals the particular patterns of collaboration with and resistance to Nazi policies in France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, and, to a lesser degree, in Denmark, Sweden, and the former Baltic republics. That history, coupled with the generous use of interview narrative from rescuers, the rescued, and non-rescuers throughout the book, more than offsets any fear that the Oliners' project, by focusing on rescue activities, might diminish the horror of the Holocaust. On the contrary, the quiet reportage of their interview materials consistently discloses the permeating perverseness of the assault on European Jewry, with its accompanying texture of terror. Their probing examination of rescuers in the midst of that structured terror, and in the midst of a present world where cynicism and despair mark our accounts of human nature, amounts to a stimulating and much-needed "public processing of goodness."

The title *The Altruistic Personality* is meant to recall for readers a book written forty years ago with the title *The Authoritarian Personality.* In that study, a group of European and North American scholars sought to probe the developmental social psychology of totalitarian oppressiveness and to delineate the personality characteristics of those who would be its framers and implementors. The Oliners, by marshaling an international team of interviewers and translators, have sought to balance that influential study with their account of altruism. In part, the purpose of the book is to tell the story of rescuers. It aims to lift up in witness a recognition that while the war and events leading up to it clearly revealed the worst of human potential, among some ordinary people it also brought forth the very best of which men and women are capable.

But there is more. Major philosophical, theological, and psychological sources of western culture have portrayed human beings as perverse and self-centered

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creatures. Humans are looked upon as survivors of a prehistoric "fall"—a fall from grace and a fall from undistorted human communication and interaction. Psychologically, persons have been presented as living in the tension between a basic desire for pleasure and self-gratification and the alien requirements of a human culture born of defensiveness and enforced by constraint. Rescuers provide rare but significant models of a kind of care for the neighbor and the stranger that cuts across the grain of these assumptions about human selfishness and aggression.

Finally, the Oliners' interest is intensely practical. By investigating the patterns of socialization and education experienced by rescuers, they hope to find support for approaches to child-rearing and nurture that will increase the chance of producing rescuers. As part of our efforts to reshape education for a global citizenship, we need to make comprehensive changes in homes, religious communities, schools, and public life. It is at this level that the Oliners' book is most suggestive.

II

The term altruism is attributed to the nineteenth-century French sociologist August Comte and received wide dissemination through the writings of Herbert Spencer in the latter half of that century. Deriving from the Latin *alter*, "other"—it refers to an orientation to the good of others rather than principally or exclusively to one's own good, as in *egoism*. The term entered into twentieth-century social science through the writings of Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin in the 1940s. In the 1960s discussions of altruism among social scientists became widespread, not coincidentally, the Oliners suggest, with the emergence of the scientific study of morality in the work of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg.

For Comte altruism denoted "devotion to the welfare of others, based in selflessness." The Oliners cite the definition given in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*: "uncalculated consideration of, regard for, or devotion to other's interests . . ." These formulations suggest that motives of self-interest must be separated from altruistic acts. Traditions from Plato's Thrasymachus to Machiavelli and Hobbes radically question whether such a separation is possible. Their accounts of human nature see persons as aggressive, competitive, and self-interested. Claims to altruism, from this perspective, are either self-deceived or mendacious. Virtue—or the appearance of virtue—is pursued because in some sense it finally serves one's self-interest. Though less openly cynical, thinkers such as Helvetius, Plato, Marx, and Freud find it hard to account theoretically for people's acting on any higher motive than enlightened self-interest.

For purposes of their study the Oliners cut through the range of nuanced characterizations of altruism to arrive at the following operational definition: "We characterize a behavior as altruistic when (1) it is directed towards helping another, (2) it involves a high risk or sacrifice to the actor, (3) it is accompanied by no external reward, and (4) it is voluntary." They go on to say, "Rescue behavior in the context of the Holocaust meets these criteria. The behavior was clearly directed toward helping; it was very high risk, threatening life itself; it was accompanied by no external reward, according to the rescued survivors' . . . testimony; and it was certainly voluntary—no external coercions required it."

III

Yad Vashem is Israel's memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. Part of its charge is to honor those who risked their lives to rescue Jews. Yad Vashem's Department of the Righteous has a commission of eighteen members with the task of determining who shall be designated as a rescuer. They base their consideration on evidence submitted by rescued survivors (or their friends or relatives), as well as ancillary documentation and personal interviews. At the time the Oliners began their study (1982) Yad Vashem had identified some 5,500 such rescuers. Now the figure is roughly 6,000. This figure may represent as much as one-tenth or as little as one-one-hundredth of the actual rescuers in Europe during the war years. Ninety-five percent of the 406 rescuers the Oliners and their team interviewed are Yad Vashem designees. The additional 5 percent are persons they identified by virtue of their interviews with rescued survivors, using criteria similar to those followed by Yad Vashem.

In addition to the rescuers the Oliner team interviewed 126 non-rescuers and 150 survivors. Of the non-rescuers, 53 were involved in resistance movements, or had helped Jews, or sometimes had done both. They were called "actives." The remaining 72 non-rescuers said that they had done nothing out of the ordinary, either to help people or resist the Nazis. They, accordingly, were called "bystanders."

The interview format used by the Oliner team had over 450 items and consisted of six main parts: a) characteristics of the family household in which respondents lived in their early years, including relationships among family members; b) parental education, occupation, politics, and religiosity, as well as parental values, attitudes, and disciplinary approaches; c) respondent's childhood and adolescent years—education, religiosity, and friendship patterns, as well as self-described personality characteristics; d) the five-year period just prior to the war—marital status, occupation, work colleagues, politics, religiosity, sense of community, and psychological closeness to various groups of people; if married, similar questions were asked about the spouse; e) the immediate prewar and war years, including employment, attitudes toward Nazis, whether Jews lived in the neighborhood, and awareness of Nazi intentions

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toward Jews; all were asked to describe their wartime lives and activities, whom they helped, and organizations they belonged to; f) the years after the war, including the present—relations with children and personal and community-helping activities in the last year; this section included forty-two personality items comprising four psychological scales.

The Oliners are quite mindful that their findings draw on accounts given of events and motives that depend on memories and self-interpretations that go back forty years or more. They have sought and used data from others, including persons rescued, to validate and test the memories of their respondents. They make the assumption that as regards major patterns of personality, persons show significant continuity over the life-span. They say, "Predispositions with regard to such matters as values, occupational interests, psychological well-being, neuroticism, extroversion, and openness to experience, as well as other self-reported personality traits, appear to change very little after the early twenties."

Samuel Oliner is a sociologist. Pearl Oliner is an educational psychologist. They have taken great pains to make sure that their study meets the requirements of rigorous social-scientific method. They identify their theoretical orientation as social-psychological. As such, it assumes that "behavior is best explained as the result of an interaction between personal and external social, or situational factors. . . . Personal factors included personality characteristics and values. Situational factors are the immediate external environmental conditions over which the actor has no control but that nonetheless affect a decision."

IV

In the analysis of their data, the Oliners adopt a lucid and logical manner of proceeding. After a chapter in which they give the narratives of a number of heroic acts of rescue, they turn to a depiction of the social context of rescue. Here, using a rich selection of narrative fragments from their interviews, they depict vividly the difficulties rescuers faced in determining how to balance their obligations to family and friends with their commitments to the rescued. What level of risks would be acceptable for spouses and children who had no say in the matter, and often no knowledge of it? Who could be trusted to know and help, or to know and not blow the whistle? Who had to be kept in the dark for their own sake and for others whose lives might depend upon their keeping quiet? Should one carry cyanide pills, or give them to rescuees, in the event they might be caught and tortured for information? Once the deception, lies, trickery, and subterfuge began, how could it be kept in bounds? Where did it end?

Did people become rescuers because of their character or because opportunity confronted them? To clarify this issue the authors compare the involvements of rescuers with non-rescuers in relation to four situational variables: 1) information about Nazi policy toward Jews and comprehension of need; 2) the particular risks involved in providing help; 3) the material resources at their disposal; and 4) the presence of a precipitating event. Their interviews revealed that by the beginning of the war non-rescuers and rescuers alike were aware of the Nazi assaults on Jews and their probable intent. What distinguished rescuers, however, was an *empathetic* comprehension of this information, coupled with a sense of being personally addressed and responsible as regards the situations of victims. The risks of helping, the Oliners concluded, were no greater for non-rescuers than rescuers. The salient differences in material resources were principally the size and configuration of one's home—whether it provided ample space and good hiding places for the rescued—and home ownership, which freed potential rescuers from the hazards of prying landlords. Interestingly, differences in material resources were minimal between rescuers and non-rescuers. The former ranged from the poorest of the poor to the very rich. The latter, however, tended to concentrate more in the middle classes. One-third of the rescuers initiated the helping relationship; 67 percent of them were approached and asked or confronted by a specific situation of need as the initiating event. We do not know how many non-rescuers were approached but did not respond willingly.

The core chapters of the Oliners' book try to unravel and weigh the factors shaping the personality and character of rescuers, and their attitudes toward Jews. Here they also address the crucial question of what moved rescuers from concern and awareness to *action*. In these pages, we get some of their richest narratives and their most significant findings.

Johan, a Dutch boy of seventeen in 1941, evaded the German draft that assigned him to compulsory labor in Germany. After three months, when his hiding place with his aunt was threatened, he found refuge (through resistance connections) with a Dutch couple, Grandpa and Grandma Bakker, who were sheltering some eighty Jews on their property. He joined that community, becoming quite committed to its mission, despite its dangers. He could have found a less dangerous place to hide through underground contacts, but he made the decision to take his risks with the Bakkers and the Jews they were helping.

As the Oliners reconstructed the motivations for his commitments, they found that Johan's values centered in patriotism, egalitarianism, and the religious examples of his grandfather and parents. He said he believed in law and order and the guarantee of freedom. He said, "The Germans robbed people of their freedom. And when they started taking the Jewish people, that really lit my fire. They took them like sheep, throwing them into trains. I couldn't stand it any more. I really became full of hate because they

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took innocent people—especially when they took little kids. . . . They took innocent people and I wanted to help."

Johan's parents, whom he characterized as very religious people, taught and modeled for him moral principles that impressed him deeply. His mother, he said, taught him not to regard others as inferiors. "She would never look down on people. She would always appreciate what people were worth, and it didn't matter whether they were poor or whatever." His father, whom he regarded as a close friend and the most important person in his life, drove home the same moral teachings:

> He taught me never to forget where you came from; to always appreciate anything from anybody. He impressed on me never to forget that when you work for yourself and have people under you, don't look down on them. Be honest and straightforward. See other people as your friends. All people are people.

Johan also reports the influence of his grandfather, a devout Christian, whom he saw as "the most religious man I knew." The grandfather "practiced what he preached" and took an active hand in visiting the sick and finding money to help poor people.

In commenting on Johan's ethical principles, the Oliners lift up two strands that are central to their analysis of rescuers' behavior: "*inclusiveness*—a predisposition to regard all people as equals and to apply similar standards of right and wrong to them without regard to social status or ethnicity—and *attachment*—a belief in the value of personal relationships and caring for the needy."

Bystanders, actives, and rescuers alike were galvanized by hatred for the Nazis. Bystanders, however, tended to be paralyzed by fear, hopelessness, and uncertainty. Survival of the self, and those closest to self, assumed paramount importance. Actives focused their hatred and anger in hostility to the oppressors, sabotaging their machinery, ambushing them if necessary and opportune, or engaging them in open battle. "More than a third (37 percent) of actives said their resistance was based on their hatred of Nazis. Far fewer rescuers (17 percent) focused on their hatred of Nazis as even one of their reasons for rescuing Jews."

Rescuers' attitudes of equality and empathy toward Jews did not always correlate with positive teachings from their families of origin. What separated rescuers from non-rescuers, however, was the absence of *negative* views and attitudes toward Jews. No rescuer, the Oliners found, reported hearing demonic qualities attributed to Jews in their homes. Non-rescuers did.

As in the case of Johan, religious influences played a significant role in many persons' decisions to engage in carrying out rescue activities. Fifteen percent of rescuers claimed religious commitments as central in their motivation. Twenty-six percent of rescued persons believed religion was a central factor in their rescuers' motivations. Here, however, the Oliners run into a problem of interpretation that their social-psychological method ill-equips them to resolve. They report that by the criteria of their studies the religious backgrounds of non-rescuers proved not to be dissimilar to those of rescuers: "The overwhelming majority in both groups (approximately 90 percent) said they were affiliated with religious institutions while growing up. The majority were Catholic (62 percent of rescuers, 72 percent of non-rescuers), the remainder were Protestant (32 percent and 23 percent respectively), or nonaffiliated. Approximately 45 percent of the respondents in both groups attended a parochial elementary school." Based on these figures, they conclude that "at best, religiosity was only weakly related to rescue."

They do note, however, that several differences distinguished rescuers from bystanders as regards their *ways* of being religious: 1) Bystanders were significantly less religious than rescuers in their early years; 2) The fathers of bystanders were significantly less religious than those of rescuers. And then, most crucially: "But rescuers did differ from others *in their interpretation of religious teaching and religious commitment*, which emphasized the common humanity of all people and therefore supported efforts to help Jews" (emphasis added). They illustrate what they mean with a series of quotes from interviews:

> My background is Christian Reformed; Israel has a special meaning for me. We have warm feelings for Israel—but that means the whole human race. That is the main principal point.
>
> I have always considered all people regardless of their nationality, ethnic origins, or race, religion, and so on, as members of one great family: mankind. This feeling has deep roots in Polish tradition, history, Christian teaching, and the attitudes of my parents and their predecessors.
>
> They taught me about God and respect for human beings—to respect others.

Later I will argue that what the Oliners lack in their interpretation of religious differences between rescuers and non-rescuers is any perspective that can systematically identify *qualitative differences* in their respondents' *appropriation* of their religious traditions. A similar lack, I will argue, gives rise to confusion in their accounts of attachment and ethical motivations. Likewise it confuses their discussion of rescuers as exhibiting "extensivity"—a breadth of inclusiveness of *all* persons as deserving respect, equity, and care—and non-rescuers as being characterized by "constriction"—a restriction of equity and respect to one's familial, ethnic, or tribal grouping. I will come back to these matters in a moment.

In assessing the ethical values held by their respon-

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dents, the Oliners addressed the question of the role of patriotism. "Like religion," they say, "the meaning of patriotism has varied depending on individual interpretation. Conventional notions of patriotism had little to do with rescue." Actives claimed patriotic motives for their direct engagement with the enemy. Appeals to patriotism as a basis for rescue were more subtle. They had to do with commitment to principles that were seen to be part of the ethos of their countries, or the values on which they were founded. "In the view of more rescuers, patriotism appeared to encompass national acceptance of pluralistic and diverse groups in relationships of equality rather than mere tolerance."

In analyzing the "core values" of rescuers and non-rescuers, the Oliners found the following: 1) "In recalling the values they learned from their parents, rescuers emphasized values relating to self significantly less frequently than non-rescuers"; 2) Rescuers gave evidence of being less materialistic in orientation than non-rescuers; 3) Parents of rescuers and non-rescuers seemed to have been equally concerned with social convention—the fulfillment of prescribed social roles and norms; 4) But one very striking difference between the parental cultures of rescuers and non-rescuers emerged: "The parents of rescuers . . . were significantly less likely to emphasize obedience. . . . Obedience is the hallmark of nonequals; obedience as an end unto itself facilitates adaptation to any type of authority—whether merited or demanded."

At the center of rescuers' explanations of their actions lay the values of *equity* and *care*. "For the overwhelming majority (87 percent) of rescuers, helping Jews was motivated by concerns of *equity* and *care*." The Oliners add: "Since it is not unusual for individuals who perform helpful deeds to attribute positive motives to themselves, particularly when the costs are high, it is important to note that the overwhelming majority (83 percent) of rescued survivors also believed that their rescuers were so motivated." Equity the Oliners associate with the Kantian tradition of fair exchange based on principles of justice. Appeals to equity are impersonal and concerned with individual rights and the welfare of society as a whole. Care, on the other hand, is concerned with the welfare of persons without a calculating attention to fairness. "Care," they point out, "can only be given by a human face." Words and phrases characterizing care—the need to be helpful, hospitable, concerned, and loving—were voiced significantly more often by rescuers than non-rescuers as they recalled the values they learned from the persons they valued most. "Generosity and expansiveness, rather than fairness and reciprocity, were significantly more important to rescuers' than to non-rescuers' parents." And again: "For most rescuers and rescued survivors the language of care dominated. *Pity, compassion, concern, affection* made up the vocabulary [that] 76 percent of rescuers and 67 percent of rescued survivors used at least once to express their reasons."

This part of the Oliners' analysis recalls the influence of Carol Gilligan's writings in the 1980s. Her position emerged out of the dialogue with Lawrence Kohlberg, whose research and theory on the development of moral reasoning builds toward post-conventional stages grounded in the Kantian ethical tradition of rights, duties, and obligations. Gilligan based her research on women's approaches to situations of moral choice. She reclaims a long tradition in philosophical and theological ethics that she calls the ethics of "responsibility." The hallmark of this latter approach is *care*—care for each person involved in a controversy or crisis, but also care for the interdependent *network* of relations in which persons interact. When the Oliners affirm that the language of *care*—of compassion, hospitality, and helpfulness—is overwhelmingly employed to express their motives, they clearly imply that face-to-face compassion is a far more salient motive for sacrificial and heroic moral altruism than abstract principles of equity and justice.

As was the case in their discussion of religiosity, in this matter of the ethics of care, I believe our authors fall into confusion. Again, the confusion arises from the failure to make *qualitative* distinctions regarding the degree of reflectiveness, the reliance upon principles, and the balance of internal and external influences upon behavior. More about this in a moment.

Some of the most compelling findings of this book are to be found in its exploration of the approaches to parenting experienced by rescuers, as a group, in contrast to non-rescuers. The central issue focuses on parental discipline. Recall the earlier point that parents of rescuers laid far less emphasis on obedience as an end in itself than those of non-rescuers. The Oliners begin with the premise, established in research, that punitive strategies in parenting correlate with anger and aggressiveness in the behavior of children so disciplined. Conversely, parents whose disciplinary techniques are benevolent, particularly those who rely on reasoning, are more likely to rear kind, generous children. In the latter approach, children are led to understand others cognitively through perspective-taking, thus developing a reflective empathy.

When the authors reviewed reports of respondents' parental disciplinary styles, they found: 1) Significantly fewer rescuers recalled any controls imposed upon them; 2) Parents of rescuers depended significantly less on physical punishment and significantly more on reasoning. Fewer rescuers than non-rescuers reported being slapped, spanked, kicked, and beaten or having their hair pulled by parents; 3) Many more non-rescuers than rescuers perceived punishment as gratuitous—a cathartic release of aggressiveness by parents; and 4) Rescuers most frequently used the word *explained* to describe parental approaches to correction

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and discipline. About "explaining" and the reasoning it involves the Oliners write:

> Reasoning communicates a message of respect for and trust in children that allows them to feel a sense of personal efficacy and warmth toward others. It is based on a presumption of error rather than a presumption of evil intent. It implies that had children but known better or understood more, they would not have acted in an inappropriate way. It is a mark of esteem for the listener; and indication of faith in his or her ability to comprehend, develop, and improve.

The authors' elaboration of these points and their significance deserves to be quoted at length. For our society, with its rampant child neglect and abuse, and its shame-based patterns of addiction, the following insights alone are worth the price of this book:

> Parents have power over children; they are not only physically stronger but also have access to material resources they can bestow or withhold. Societal norms generally support their superior position, affirming their rights to humiliate or insult and simultaneously condemn children who might retaliate. When adults voluntarily abdicate the use of power in favor of explanation, they are modeling appropriate behavior toward the weak on the part of the powerful. Faced with powerless others, children so raised in turn have at their disposal an internal "script"—a store of recollections, dialogues, and activities ready to be activated. They need not depend on innovation or improvisation but rather simply retrieve what is already imprinted on their memories. In such circumstances, too, children are more likely to internalize their parents' standards. Rescuers were significantly more likely to perceive themselves as having personal integrity. They not only saw themselves as more caring and responsible but also as more honest and helpful than non-rescuers.

Though they countenance no simple correlation of good parenting and warm bonding in households with rescuing behavior, and their opposite with non-rescue, the Oliners do make clear how crucial parental modeling and the patterns of parent-child interaction are in the formation of persons' approaches to the use of their power to help those in danger, oppression, or need.

V

What moves people from concern to *action*? Their analysis led the Oliners to recognize three major types of motivation for rescue activity and its risks. The first type, which includes 37 percent of rescuers, they identify as the *empathetic orientation*. Here the response to need emerges out of direct connection with the distressed other. Compassion, sympathy, and pity are its characteristic expression. The reactions of this group usually include both emotional and cognitive dimensions. These persons, it seems, are the prototypes of the "ethics of care."

The second and largest group (52 percent) are described as the *normocentric orientation*. Persons of this type acted out of feelings of obligation in relation to a social reference group with whom the actors identified and whose explicit and implicit rules they felt obliged to obey. Here the social group, rather than the claims of the victim, motivate the behavior. Feelings of obligation or duty in this group are frequently coupled with anticipation of feelings of guilt or shame if one fails to act.

The third and smallest group (11 percent) are identified as the *principled orientation*. Persons in this group had indirect relations to victims, mediated through overarching axioms or principles, largely autonomously derived. People with this orientation interpreted the persecution of Jews as a violation of moral principles, and the main goal of their rescue behavior was to reaffirm and act on these principles. The Oliners found, in this group, persons who relied both upon principles of justice and equity, on the one hand, and upon principles of care, on the other.

This review of the Oliners' typology of motivations for rescue activity becomes the occasion to focus the criticisms I offered at earlier points in this essay. At several junctures I have pointed to the absence of any framework by which the Oliners can distinguish qualitative differences in the *ways* persons are religious, the *ways* they make sense of the claims of care, and the *ways* they interpret what is their duty or obligation. Early in the book, the authors differentiate themselves from the work on moral motivation and choice of Lawrence Kohlberg. They view Kohlberg as too narrowly cognitive in orientation, and as being wedded to the Kantian ethical tradition. Implicitly, they align themselves with the tradition of the ethics of responsibility and care, with its related connections to the ethics of character. I maintain that they did not have to exclude the valuable typology that Kohlberg offers us in order to affirm the importance of the ethics of care and character. And in turning away from Kohlberg, they create a typology that fails to make some very important distinctions to which the authors themselves have called our attention in the book. Let me explain.

By lumping *all* persons who act out of a sense of duty and obligation derived from membership in a reference group together in their *normocentric orientation*, the authors fail to distinguish those who act from the standpoint of a reflective and self-chosen set of commitments (i.e., in accord with a reasoning approach) from those whose membership is a matter of fate and socialization (i.e., out of a fear of group

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exclusion, disappointment, or exclusion). They fail to distinguish those who meet the expectations of valued others because their sense of self and identity is totally dependent upon that membership from those who express their selfhood and identity through the choice to affiliate with a group and to adopt its norms. They fail to distinguish two types of religious persons who may be part of this group: the *first*, who depend completely upon the literal interpretation of Scripture and tradition by an authoritarian pastor, and *second*, those who undertake rescue activity as the command of God, based upon a thoughtful and self-ratified interpretation of the ethical imperatives of the gospel. It is tempting to construe all persons in the *normocentric* type into something like Kohlberg's *conventional* stages. I hope that the distinctions to which I have pointed help the reader to see why that would be a mistake, and why we need a framework for sorting out these finer-grained but essential differences in the operations of knowing and valuing underlying persons' selfhood, membership, interpretations, and motivations.

Similar ambiguities surround the Oliners' identification of the *empathetic orientation*. We do not know whether the "other" who moves one to empathetic identification and action is a single person, in every instance, or may arise from the recognition of a class of such persons. We do not know whether persons in this group, while moved by the presence and claims of individuals with whom they are in face-to-face relations, may, on another level, be oblivious to and unmoved by more impersonal social structures and practices that consistently put and keep persons in situations of oppression and deprivation. In short, we do not know whether we are dealing again with something like Kohlberg's conventional stages, but this time focused on *care* rather than duty, or whether we would find a wide variety of interpretations based on varying degrees and levels of social perspective-taking, leading to compassionate response at and beyond the level of face-to-face concern.

Only with regard to the Oliners' third type, the *principled orientation*, do we get attention to the level of reflectivity and autonomy exercised by persons choosing rescue activity as an expression of their duty in relation to the demands of equity and justice, or their duty in relation to the imperative to care. These persons one is tempted to see as representatives of Kohlberg's post-conventional or principled level of moral understanding and action. Here again, however, confusions arise. It is intriguing that the two examples our authors offer of this orientation—one focused on the ethics of justice, the other on the ethics of care—have in common a strong rootage in religious traditions that provide an indispensable context, source, and grounding of courage for their acting on their ethical principles. The distinction the Oliners made between the appropriation of religious traditions by non-rescuers and rescuers comes to mind here: The rescuers tended to understand the inclusiveness and extensiveness of injunctions to love to extend to all persons and groups. Yet the authors' final typology does not allow for the recognition of the salience of religious faith so understood.

Many of these confusions, in an otherwise remarkable and valuable work, could be clarified by complementing their present modes of analysis with constructive developmental-stage theories of ego, moral, and faith development. I have in mind the work of Robert Kegan (*The Evolving Self*, 1982), Lawrence Kohlberg (*The Psychology of Moral Development*, 3 vols., 1980s), and my own work on faith development (*Stages of Faith*, 1981). A rich extension and valuable use of the Oliners' data would be to submit their interviews to analysis and interpretation from these constructive developmental standpoints. The results could strengthen an already remarkably rich interpretative contribution. And they would extend practically our ability to carry through to action a central passion of the Oliners: that of influencing the shape of education, families and parenting, religious formation—and of public policy—so as systematically to strengthen the probabilities of nurturing more persons who embody and act from the qualities of character and compassion exhibited by rescuers. FT

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Report

East Germany: Luther vs. Lenin

Uwe Siemon-Netto

It is hard to disagree with the Reverend Johannes Richter of Leipzig's *Thomaskirche* when he says that this has been the East German church's moment of *kairos*. Consider: pastors are serving as government ministers in what used to be a Communist country. Pastors—of varied political persuasions—have founded the democratic parties that have totally changed East Germany. Pastors chaired the "Round Tables" that guided the transition from Communism to democracy, and they temporarily ruled cities whose mayors and councilmen had resigned. Finally, having protected Christians and others from political persecution by the Communists, pastors are now shielding these Communists from the people's wrath.

Pastor Uwe Holmer, whose children were deprived of higher education because of their Christian faith, gave shelter to former Communist leader Erich Honecker and his wife Margot who, as Minister of Education, had prevented those children from attending university. Yet Holmer is by no means a left-winger; he is a Christian Democrat.

It is one of the most remarkable phenomena of East Germany's non-violent revolution that it was guided and moderated by the church whose ministers and faithful were once severely persecuted and until very recently discriminated against by the *ancien règime*. It is equally remarkable that this revolution appears to prove Lenin wrong and Luther right.

Lenin once said that Germans were incapable of making a revolution; for before storming a railroad station they would buy platform tickets. Assorted writers, notably Thomas Mann and William L. Shirer, saw this alleged inability to rebel as a distinctly Lutheran deficiency. The lamentable performance of a considerable part of the German church during World War II seemed to prove their point.

To be fair to Lenin, he was at least half-right. In a sense, the East Germans did buy their platform tickets before storming the station. Their huge demonstrations were orderly. Having completed their day's work, the demonstrators took buses, trams, and trains to the rallies and never cheated on the fares. And they shed no blood; they destroyed no property. The point is, however, that in their orderliness they succeeded.

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While the peaceful nature of this upheaval has received due attention world-wide, one significant aspect has so far been ignored: The first genuinely German revolution in four hundred years, taking place in the Lutheran heartland, proceeded precisely along the lines envisioned by Luther himself.

One of the most enduring stereotypes about Luther claims that his strict interpretation of Romans 13—"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities"—precluded any resistance to tyranny in Germany. Friedrich Engels called Luther a *Fürstenknecht*, a lackey of princes. Shirer spoke of Luther's "ferocious [belief] in absolute political authority." Both referred to the reformer's harsh condemnation, during the Peasants' Revolt of the 1520s, of the "robbing and murdering hordes of peasants."

It is not necessary here to delve into the complexities of Luther's attitude toward temporal authority. But in order to understand the extraordinary role of the church in the recent events in East Germany, we must know what it was that Luther objected to: not resistance but insurrection. For insurrection, Luther thought, results in anarchy, which is "a source of evil of the highest degree," as Walter Künneth has pointed out. The French, Russian, Chinese, and Cambodian revolutions have shown this to be true.

That the East German revolution did not follow these bloody patterns is the accomplishment of a church which by now represents but a minority of the population. Of the sixteen million East Germans, only four to five million belong to the Protestant *Landeskirchen* which make up the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic. Fewer than one million are Roman Catholics. Some 40,000 adhere to non-conformist denominations.

In the 825-year-old city of Leipzig, the birthplace of socialism that became the hub of the gentle overthrow of Communism, a mere 12 percent of its 530,000 citizens are Christians. Yet the Monday night demonstrations of up to half a million people had their origins in prayer services in six churches whose naves and balconies had not been that full in centuries. "Many of these young people had no idea what Christianity was all about," said Superintendent Johannes Richter of the *Thomaskirche* where Johann Sebastian Bach wrote most of his cantatas. "When they first entered they thought that the crucifix above the

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altar represented a gymnast."

But they listened to the men and women in the pulpits who exhorted them not to resort to violence. The "nice heathens," as Richter called them, proved very obedient.

It is impossible to understand the church's success without returning to the late 1940s when the Communists solidified their hold on what was then called the Soviet zone of occupation. Virtually the entire elite of that part of Germany was forced to go West: the scientists, the lawyers, the writers, the editors, the landowners, the nobility, the bourgeoisie, the master craftsmen. And whenever in the subsequent decades a new fledgling elite developed, it too fled to West Germany.

East Germans used to say that the letters DDR, an acronym for *Deutsche Demokratische Republik,* stood for *Der dämliche Rest,* the stupid rest who stayed behind. The only remaining members of the old elite were the clergy, for good pastors do not leave their flocks. And unlike many of their predecessors in the Third Reich, these ministers did not betray their faith to collaborate with the atheistic rulers. The Communists' attempt to create a nucleus of fellow-travelling clergymen ended in miserable failure. Of some 7,500 pastors, only two hundred joined the pro-Communist *Pfarrerbund,* whose diminutive size became such an embarrassment to the Party that the group was quietly dissolved.

It is quite possible that things might be entirely different now in East Germany had not a virulent *Kirchenkampf,* or church struggle, in the 1950s accomplished two things. First, while prompting the lukewarm majority of the members to turn away from the church, it strengthened an ardent minority in their faith. Second, it helped create an interdenominational church of the catacombs that functioned within and without the manifest church. Taking a cue from the Communists, it developed a cellular system that infiltrated the entire society.

Christian cells, mostly little prayer groups, established themselves in high-rise buildings, offices, factories, the military, and, most especially, the universities, whose students, with the exception of the theologians, were supposed to be atheists. When I researched this development fifteen years ago, I was surprised by the high proportion of young scientists in the vestries of many congregations. How did they get there?

In hundreds of interviews I discovered that without even overtly propagating their faith small nuclei of Christians proved enormously attractive to their neighbors, fellow-students, and colleagues. Their language, their demeanor, their facial expressions distinguished them favorably not only from party functionaries but also from the anguished general population. They were the ones people turned to in times of trouble. While the church lost most of its half-hearted members, it gained new and fervent ones as a consequence of the performance of ordinary Christians in society. Quantitatively the trend in church membership is still negative. But qualitatively it is very positive indeed. As the saying goes in East Germany, "the church has shrunk its way back to health."

The exemplary behavior of ordinary Christians in society provided the necessary backdrop for the upright performance of pastors and bishops who have earned "an amazing credibility bonus among non-Christians," according to Superintendent Richter. It was the church that provided protection to citizens who had become outcasts after unsuccessful attempts to flee the country or pending approval of their applications to emigrate legally. It was the church that enabled banned playwrights to have their work performed and enabled banned singers to sing their songs of protest. It was the church that took up environmental concerns.

There exists in the West the misconception that just because many East German pastors are long-haired and bearded and have a proclivity for strumming their guitars to the tune of "Kumbaya" they must be radical "green" agitators, like so many of their brethren across the border. But this would be a thoroughly misleading assessment of the East Germany clergy.

To begin with, the environmental catastrophe in East Germany after forty-five years of Communism is such that a pastor would be negligent in his duties to God and his creation if he didn't speak up. Just a few examples: Nuclear reactors are so sloppily built and badly maintained that West German experts consider Chernobyl-type disasters a distinct possibility. Half of East Germany's soil and much of its ground water are dangerously polluted. The emissions of cancer-causing cadmium are often 120 times the permissible level. One-third of Leipzig's children suffer from pulmonary and bronchial complaints because the lignite refineries to the south of the city belch huge amounts of unfiltered coal dust and sulphur monoxide into the air. In Leipzig, the life expectancy is six years below the East German average of 73 years, which is three years less than that of West Germany. In some parts of the country pollution is impeding children's growth to normal height.

Yet it would be wrong to assume that East German pastors are trying to fill their pews by stressing social issues rather than proclaiming the Gospel. Not that it hasn't been tried in the past. Especially in the uniate *Landeskirchen* of the formerly Prussian provinces, liberal pastors tried to win over the youth by appearing to be "modern." In 1976, Manfred Stolpe, the jurist who is second-in-command of the East German *Kirchenbund,* told me, "This tactic was a resounding failure. We were amazed to find that not the liberal uniate Prussian church but the more orthodox Luth-

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eran churches of Saxony and Thuringia, sticking to their confessions, attracted the young generation."

I have just spent several weeks in Saxony whence I fled as a child. I have listened to and read scores of some of the best sermons in my life. While they obviously addressed the situation in which East Germans lived at the time, none of them was a political speech, none made concessions to the *Zeitgeist*, and all were crisp and Scipture-oriented. They were quintessentially Lutheran.

Pastors I spoke to were often bewildered by their new political duties. Communist functionaries would not talk to the opposition except in the presence of clergymen. As most of the East German elite had left, pastors became teachers of democracy. For four decades the church was the only major institution in the society practicing democratic elections.

As so many potential politicians had either gone West or collaborated with the totalitarian regime, pastors found themselves in the unusual roles of founders and leaders of political parties right across the political spectrum from social democrat to conservative. It is simply not true that the East German church, like its West German counterpart, has become a playground of left-wing clerics trying to immanentize the *eschaton*, although those types do exist; this is, after all, not just the land of Luther but also the land of Thomas Müntzer.

But the right-of-center Alliance for Germany, victorious in the March 18 general elections, has just as many pastors and lay church officials among its leaders as the Social Democrats and the Green party. The staunchly conservative German Social Union was founded by Hans-Wilhelm Ebeling, pastor at the *Thomaskirche*. And the Minister of Defense in the new East German government is Pastor Rainer Eppelmann, a former bricklayer who spent eight months in a military jail for refusing to swear the oath of allegiance to the atheistic state. (Overall, the parliament elected in March contains among its four hundred members nineteen ordained pastors: eight belong to conservative parties, eight are Social Democrats, and three belong to a centrist electoral alliance.)

Would Luther have approved? Probably yes. Luther dreaded nothing more than political voids that lead to anarchy. And in this case only pastors were available to fill the void. Under exceptional circumstances, Luther said, God sends *viri miraculosi* to put things right. Who better than ministers steeled by forty-five years of suffering?

Time will tell if this is truly the church's *kairos*, as Johannes Richter says. Time will also tell if the church has made the best use of a great opportunity. Will pastors in political positions, once their mission is accomplished, quietly let go of their power and return to their pulpits to tackle the task of bringing the Gospel to the "nice heathens"? Or will *hubris* prompt them to delight in and maintain secular power?

Lutherans around the world will be watching. They have reason the be proud of their East German brethren for proving Luther right. Now they must pray that the most splendid event in the history of their church will be brought to its proper conclusion. FT

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Books In Review

Michael Harrington's Socialism

SOCIALISM PAST AND FUTURE. BY MICHAEL HARRINGTON. *Arcade Publishing. 320 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by **Max L. Stackhouse**

IF one is going to be a socialist, Michael Harrington's variety is perhaps the best kind to be. Before his premature death from cancer this past year, Harrington worked with Dorothy Day to help the poor in New York slums, wrote sixteen books, made a major impact on national policy by calling attention to the scandal of poverty in our midst by his *The Other America*, and brought hundreds of disenchanted "old left" leaders from the thirties and perhaps thousands more of the alienated "new left" activists from the sixties into the mainstream of democratic participation.

As his final book demonstrates, Harrington was a democratic socialist in the traditions of Norman Thomas, Antonio Gramsci, Gunnar Myrdal, John Kenneth Galbraith, Willie Brandt, and Michael Manley. That is, he set a course that would not compromise democracy for the sake of socialism—a position that set him apart from assorted domestic political sectarians and especially from the Marxist-Leninist establishments and ideological Liberationists who, until recently, commanded the rhetoric as well as the policies in Eastern Europe and the Third World.

It is sad that Harrington did not live to see the transformations now taking place in Eastern Europe and Latin America as the people there struggle for (or stumble toward) democracy, for he would have been vindicated in his critique of the betrayals of the best dreams of socialism by the Leninist-Stalinist deviations that, he thinks, subverted the more promising aspects of Marx. In this regard, his 1972 volume, *Socialism*, stands as a monument in tracing the internal ideological battles that distorted what at least half of the world's population in this century has held to be the dream of a better, more cooperative life for the common people.

In that, as in all his work (including the present volume), Harrington manifests a sense of honesty. He would not twist the data to make things come out favorably for socialism, although he obviously saw the data through glasses ground on socialist theory. In some respects, Harrington might be seen as doing for contemporary socialism what Peter Berger's *The Capitalist Revolution* does for capitalism. In both instances we see what can be said with integrity about a position in the face of historical developments and the accumulation of data. In Harrington's case, this motivation is, I think, combined with another consideration: he knew he was dying, and he wanted to give, as it were, a last message to his followers and the nation.

HARRINGTON'S honesty was such that he began to recognize inadequacies in Marxist theory—not only in distortions brought to it by Stalin or power-hungry bureaucrats, but directly in Marx's scientific socialism itself. He was, as it were, regrinding his glasses, the spectacles by which democratic socialism reads the world. If the hopes of the masses are to be fulfilled, Harrington came to believe, it will not be with the Marx who is read through the Manifesto or through the Party or even through the "great" interpreters—Engels, Lenin, Kautsky, etc. Instead, it will be with the Marx whose methods of concrete analysis allow us to interpret "things as they really are" and to foresee that "socialization" is the wave of the future even as dogmatic socialism begins to fail.

Harrington means by "socialization" the idea that the future is bringing, and will bring in geometrically increasing ratios, a deeper sense of increased human interdependence in a corporate environment, one marked by international demands for mutuality, by global communication and transportation, and by interpenetrating systems of production, distribution, and consumption, all of them interlocked and increasingly inclusive of more and more nations of the world. To put it crudely, the "international capitalist system" is becoming the matrix of increased socialization.

Harrington wants, above all, to see this socialization take place in a context where people have increased freedom (by which he means direct, grass-roots control over decisions shaping their own fate) and where principles of "social justice" (which implies an egalitarian norm) will govern both the polity and the policy of the common life. In this vision, he seeks to move beyond debates about the "welfare state" or East/West power politics and to find a way of speaking about a reliable, humane, and caring form of civil society.

This is a subtle book, one that contains enough old leftist phrases to make conservatives' hair stand on end, but is just as likely in other ways to make true-believer leftists pull theirs out. What Harrington is doing here is comparable to what the Reformation did to Medieval Christianity. The Reformation was utterly dependent on what came before it, but it transformed the past by using parts of it against other parts, by taking key emphases already widely accepted among the faithful and showing that, if one saw this doctrine or that practice from a slightly different angle, everything was changed—all the while managing to maintain con-

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tinuity with the deepest sources of the tradition.

A CLUE to this understanding of Harrington is evident in the ways in which he explicitly (if gently and unobtrusively) singles out and disposes of some of the mistakes in Marx's own thinking that have come to disfigure Marxist analysis. Harrington specifies a number of areas where socialism must undertake a revision of Marx (or sort out again what Marx's method "really" means):

—Although Marx does so again and again in rhetorical flourishes, "society" cannot be seen as an agent. To say that "society causes" x or y, or to appeal to impersonal "social forces" that have a blind necessity to them, tells us very little as to why people act the way they do and history develops the way it does. In this, if I read him correctly, Harrington differs even from the mild Marxism of Robert Heilbroner in, for instance, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism,* wherein the inherent social structure of a phenomenon seems to take on machine-like inevitability.

—The basic structures of the common life cannot be grasped by class analysis alone, although Marx thought the class factor was decisive. Divisions and bondings occur among people and groups on the basis of categories of skill, morality, ethnicity, cultural tradition, gender, religion, etc. that are not reducible to class analysis, and attempts to use a single version of the "master-slave" relationship to understand the modern social world is to pervert the real fabric of human relationships.

—Marx expected the proletariat to become a majoritarian movement under capitalism, for he and many followers expected that the middle strata would inevitably be proletarianized. That does not seem to be what has happened. Instead, capitalism has engendered an expanding series of middle classes.

—Marx never asked how socialism might be achieved directly by a pre-industrial society; he evidently believed that each must go through a capitalist stage. Thus his appropriation and application as a guide to Third World development has proven to be extremely precarious.

—Marx anticipated a predictable "spread effect" of industrialization. That is, if the modern means of production were introduced in a society, certain social, political, legal, and cultural changes would inevitably follow. In fact, cultures and civilizations turn out to be complex products of multiple causes and influences and do not follow any single pattern of historical logic.

For all his revisionism, however, there is still much from Marx that Harrington wants to preserve. It is in the traditions of Marxism, broadly understood, that we will find the intellectual and social forces that will condition the future. We must recognize, Harrington suggests, that the market is an historically constructed artifact. It is not part of the natural order of things, but is continuously shaped by a broad range of human decisions that are not altogether rational or substantively just and that could be made to be more so.

Furthermore, he says, people will, under the continuing impact of socialization, demand more democracy in the workplace, increasing participation in both the scientific and the human dynamics side of management, further decolonialization where it obtains, and less destructive disruption of the bio-physical universe that threatens all—the least advantaged most directly and immediately.

ON reading and reflecting on this work, I am reminded of why it is that I remained in dialogue with the Boston-area branch of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), founded by Harrington and led locally by John Cort (author of *Christian Socialism*) for more than a decade. Here is an authentic, human voice filled with ethical commitment. He wants the best for America and for dispossessed people everywhere. There was not a mean bone in Harrington, and I often wish that I could say as much about people with whom I agree more than I did with him.

I finally broke with DSOC, however, after visiting and studying in socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Asia. The break had to do partly with whether, if push came to shove, democracy would be sacrificed for socialism or socialism for democracy. It turned out that it makes a great deal of difference whether one is a democratic socialist or a social democrat, for the relative location of nouns, which convey the substance of things, and adjectives, which represent the modifiers, weights priorities time after time. John Cort was clear about this, and came down on the democratic side, as did, finally, Harrington as well. But many of the activists were not so inclined and were contemptuous of those who made that choice.

My break had also, and more profoundly, to do with fundamental understanding of human nature, and with the relationship of that understanding to the socialist vision. It must be said that this is Harrington's greatest weakness, and that he does not differ from Marx in it. Harrington abandoned his Christian faith early. He makes vague religious noises in *The Politics at God's Funeral: The Spiritual Crisis of Western Civilization,* but they smack as much of a resigned Nietzscheanism as of anything authentically Christian. Harrington manifests, as did Marx, a rather empty anthropology and an intentionally empty metaphysics. That lack can be compensated for in the short run by authentic personal compassion, but over time it leads to a dispirited culture and an amoral civilization.

THIS defect shows up in the very methods of Marxist social analysis, not just in its assessment of particular phenomena. If basic spiritual, moral, and religious matters are not included in the primary

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understanding of why people do what they do, why civilizations follow the courses they follow, and why cultures get shaped the way they do get shaped, then something essential about the human condition is falsified. These things are not by-products, epiphenomena, or projections, as no small number of capitalist as well as socialist authors today think. In fact, when deprived of an explicit metaphysical-moral underpinning, the ideologies of either capitalism or socialism themselves take on cultish form, complete with secularized high priests, denominational orthodoxies, doctrinal disputes, and ritual excommunications—all under the garb of social analysis.

Recent events suggest that the attempt to rehabilitate the secular radical vision may well fail. If it does—and I think it will—it will do so because it is not radical enough—it does not sufficiently take into account the moral and spiritual forces in social life. It is not enough simply to add these "soft" factors to conventional social analysis in some extrinsic way. The "hard" fact is that any scheme of social analysis that does not understand these factors to lie at the heart of the intellectual task is not yet deep or profound. It is bad social analysis and it will not, in the long run, satisfy or prevail. Those seeking redirection of the modern forces of socialization forget that at their peril.

Never the Twain

JAPAN: IN THE LAND OF THE BROKENHEARTED. BY MICHAEL SHAPIRO. *Henry Holt & Company. 254 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by **Thomas Berger**

IN recent years writing on Japan has become a veritable cottage industry. In the slew of literature promising to reveal and explain the secrets of that mysterious—and economically prominent—island nation, Michael Shapiro's book stands out both for its relatively modest focus and for its often penetrating insight. It is not so much a book on Japan per se, but rather on the subject of that nation's relationship to the foreigners who live there. The story it tells is thus admittedly a partial and one-sided one. It is nonetheless informative and it indirectly raises questions with disturbing implications for the future of Japan's relations with the rest of the world.

In general, Shapiro writes, there are two types of foreigners who go to live in Japan. There are those, like himself, who go purely for professional reasons and who have neither the need nor the desire to involve themselves very deeply in the society. And then there are those he calls the "enthusiasts," people who throw themselves into the task of mastering the language and the culture and who try to enter and be accepted by Japanese society. While such enthusiasm is common among people living in any foreign land, the barriers that confront the foreigner in Japan seem far more formidable than elsewhere. Indeed the insularity of the Japanese seems matched only by the passion with which these "enthusiasts" seek to belong, a passion so great that their relationship to Japan can be better described as a love affair than as a mere desire to fit in. But as the subtitle *Land of the Brokenhearted* suggests, Shapiro feels that this particular infatuation is in the end doomed to failure, or at best wrought with great emotional difficulties.

The archetype for all foreign enthusiasts of Japan was Lafcadio Hearn, a journalist who arrived in Japan at the turn of the century on what was supposed to be a one-year assignment. Instead, he quit his original job, married a Japanese woman, and settled down to spend the rest of his life in the country toward which he developed an irresistible yearning, but which seemed always to keep him at arm's distance. Michael Shapiro traces Hearn's ultimately unsatisfactory love affair with Japan, periodically interspersing his story with those of five latter-day Japan enthusiasts who live there today.

One is the wife of a young Japanese university professor whom she met when they were students in the U.S. She refuses to allow herself to be fingerprinted for alien registration out of a moral conviction that these requirements are discriminatory against foreigners, especially the second and even third generation of Koreans who have been born in Japan without being granted citizenship. Consequently she becomes, much against her will, a rebel against a system which emphasizes conformity for the sake of group harmony, and she is subjected to intense media scrutiny and official pressure.

Another character, a Harvard-educated businessman, joins a small company and develops a close personal relationship with his boss. Though he is willing to work long hours, as much to meet the demands of the group as to do his work, and though he does manage to overcome various social barriers (reinforced in his case because he is black as well as foreign), he is frustrated when he tries to win acceptance for his own ideas and projects.

There is also an American missionary couple who have dedicated their lives to spreading the word of God in a small rural community. They realize that in the overwhelmingly closed context of Japanese society they have little chance of gaining many new converts to their faith, but they carry on in hope that somehow their example will make a difference to the few followers they do manage to attract.

Finally, there is an American baseball player, whose experiences in attempting to fit into a Japanese team—to which I will return presently—are perhaps the most revealing of all Shapiro's characters.

OUT of the experiences of Hearn

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and his modern-day successors there emerges an emotional cycle apparently common to all foreigners who try to win acceptance from Japanese society. First, there is the initial excitement of entry into a new land. This is followed by a feeling of Marco Polo-like exhilaration at mastering a new country and an alien culture, an exhilaration usually brought to an end by the often cruel shock that all is not exactly what it had seemed to be.

This comes in different forms for different people. For the wife of the Japanese professor, it comes on the day one of her closest Japanese acquaintances tells her she is happy for their friendship because it gives her a chance to practice her English. For the American businessman, it comes when he tries to convince his boss to let him lead the company's expansion abroad, only to have his plans quietly ignored for reasons that are never made clear to him. Thereafter all the characters go through alternating periods of relative contentment and often intense frustration, finally arriving at a kind of passive acceptance of the reality that they will never be fully accepted in Japanese society because of what they are: outsiders.

While most Japanese are eager to travel abroad and to meet and learn about people from other cultures, there is at the same time a powerful impulse to prevent them from becoming too close to non-Japanese. In the end, one character explains, friendships between Japanese and foreigners are always defined in terms of nationality. One can never overcome the basic psychological barrier with which the Japanese almost instinctively separate themselves from other peoples, regardless of the length or apparent warmth of a particular relationship. After ten years the wife of the Japanese professor still found herself being referred to by her closest friends as "the foreigner," and the missionary couple rarely succeeded in achieving a more than superficial level of communication despite ties to the community they lived in stretching over forty years.

In relating the stories of his informants, Shapiro avoids excessive embellishments of his own. He thus distinguishes his work from the many academic descriptions of Japanese culture whose turgid analyses obscure the subject they are meant to explore. Much of what is discussed here has already been covered in other books on Japan. That Japan is a highly insular culture comes, by now, as hardly a surprise to anyone. Similarly, the problems of cross-cultural communication have been discussed *ad nauseam*. And the plight of the Koreans and other minorities in Japan has been thoroughly described elsewhere. Yet, through his uncluttered narration of his informants' experiences, Shapiro manages to convey much of the flavor of Japanese society with a simple clarity often lacking in other works.

He also manages to offer certain fresh insights into Japanese culture. Of particular interest in this regard are the comments of the American baseball player on how the game, while on the surface played in more or less the same way as in the U.S., has been transformed in the Japanese setting. The main emphasis for the Japanese teams is to display their "fighting spirit," which involves engaging in extensive, unnecessary, even harmful physical training programs. Yet despite all the talk of guts and determination, Japanese players avoid situations where that fighting spirit might be tested. Fighting spirit to them is an infielder diving at the ball even when it is past him, in order to get dirt on his uniform to show he tried. At the same time, pitchers are taught not to challenge strong batters with fast balls, but rather to try to get a good slider over the corner. Related to this is a mentality, contrary to Western notions of fighting spirit, that is decidedly averse to taking risks and prefers to stick to doing the expected. Japanese fielders often refuse to charge an oddly bouncing ball even if it means not making the play, because they know that while they will not be faulted by the coaches for failing to respond to unusual circumstances, acting in an unexpected manner and failing could have serious consequences.

In his concluding comments, Shapiro likens his stay in Japan to the situation of someone who finds himself at a party standing in the corner of a crowded room filled with sounds of laughter and of people trying to talk to one another over the noise. While he gets friendly nods from the people he knows, he doesn't seem to be able to join the party, and in the end he leaves the room without any feeling of regret or desire to go back. It is time, he feels, to go home.

The question that Shapiro leaves unanswered is what happens when he, and other foreigners, can no longer leave the party? As Japan's economic influence spreads around the world, as ever more Americans and other nationalities find themselves working with or for Japanese bosses, it will no longer be possible for anyone to ignore Japan. And given the kind of psychological insularity he describes, what are the chances that non-Japanese in this new world will find their interests being satisfied?

Japanese officials often accuse foreigners of not making the effort required to adapt to and meet the needs of the Japanese market, of not recognizing sufficiently or of neglecting altogether the necessity to learn the native culture and build personal relationships. Yet as the stories in this book show (and they seem to be borne out by the experiences of many other foreigners, American and non-American alike, who have lived in that country), no level of good will and determination, however long sustained, is likely to break through the deep psychological barriers the Japanese have erected against the outside world.

It is perhaps unrealistic to expect that the people of any two nations should bear any great love for one another. But unless Japan becomes more capable of accepting outsiders, there are reasons for concern

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even for those whose experiences of that nation do not take the form of an unrequited love affair.

Feminist Theodicy

WOMEN AND EVIL. BY NELL NODDINGS. *University of California Press. 284 pp. $25.*

Reviewed by **Maria McFadden**

FOR centuries theologians and philosophers have been struggling with the agonizing and bewildering problem of evil. Believing Jews and Christians cannot escape the perennial dilemma of reconciling the existence of evil with belief in an all-good and all-powerful God. Even the most persuasive exercises in theodicy are haunted by echoes from Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.*: "If God is good, he is not God; if God is God, he is not good."

In her new book *Women and Evil,* Nell Noddings attempts to look at the problem of evil in a new light—a specifically feminine, or rather feminist, light. What, she asks, is evil, what is woman's relationship to evil, and what can we do about evil? And who is this God who permits it? Noddings' answers to these questions have won her praise in feminist and leftwing circles; her book is hailed by Rosemary Ruether and Daniel Maguire as an "important contribution to philosophical ethics" and a work that should be "significant" in theological seminaries. The book *is* of theological interest, though perhaps not entirely in ways that the author intended.

Let us look at her findings. According to Noddings, history (including philosophy, theology, politics, societal structures) up to this point has obscured the nature of the problem of evil because all systems for dealing with it have been created, elaborated, and promoted by and for males. The problem is that males tend to think in terms of absolutes and in terms of power. This is why, Noddings tells us, so many world religions postulate an all-powerful and absolutely just and good God, and also why there is a belief in abstract and powerful evil. Because men have difficulty in dealing with paradox and ambiguity, they cannot accept the evil in themselves, and so they project it onto others: human enemies (which explains the prevalence of war) or an omnipotent God (which allows them to avoid their own responsibility). Noddings argues that the projecting of evil onto God and a mystical external realm creates "ethical terror" (fear of the Lord, of doing evil and not being forgiven) even as it allows men to distance themselves from others and thus avoid dealing with the evil within. (Women, by contrast, being more relational and better able to deal with ambiguity, are thus more apt to deal with evil in themselves and work out the evil in their relations with others.)

Men also tend to find more immediate "scapegoats" for evil—women. Noddings describes how for centuries women have been seen as leading men to evil, as themselves embodying evil. Since Aristotle's time, she writes, women have come to be associated with the body and the material, and men with the mental and spiritual. Fear and hatred of the body and ambiguous beliefs and feelings about sexuality produced negative views of women, another instance of men experiencing "evil" but projecting it elsewhere. Noddings finds the Judeo-Christian tradition especially culpable in women's denigration: there is the Adam and Eve story, with Eve held responsible for accepting the serpent's temptation and leading man to sin; the Old Testament "uncleanness" references and practices; the long history of burning witches; even the veneration of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary, in this reading, has been revered by men because she is not sexual and thus not really womanly; and yet she is a mother, and motherhood, since it is necessary to bring about and bring up men, is a proper woman's role.

IN elaborating on traditional views of proper (non-evil) women's roles, Noddings refers to Jung's "feminine principle." Women in this view are "essentially unconscious," and that essence is basically good. The natural feminine attributes are empathy, nurturing, and caring for the emotional and physical well-being of those around them—attributes that arise from woman's natural role as mother and protector. But should a woman try to "be like a man" and thus lose contact with her unconscious good, she will do evil. This belief, says Noddings, explains why women haven't been heard in the moral debate about evil (to enter it they would have to become "conscious").

The question now is "how much of the transmitted female model should we retain and affirm?" It is apparent that Noddings accepts much of the Jungian view of women. Women, she believes, *are* basically good and caring, and they should hold on to their nurturing feminine attributes, as long as they do not let themselves be oppressed through them. Men need to come to understand that women can be at once conscious (and part of the morality debate) *and* good.

Noddings next turns to the "phenomenology of evil." Evil, whether physical or psychic, involves three basic conditions: pain, separation, and helplessness. These conditions are not *always* associated with evil; indeed, they are sometimes necessary, as in the pain of childbirth, the separation of mother and child, the helplessness of an infant. Noddings posits as an example of the relationship of these conditions to real evil the situation of a hopelessly ill elderly woman who endures excruciating pain, is separated from all loved ones, and is helpless to help herself.

Evil so conceived, Noddings indicates, will require of us some rethinking of our moral categories, some transpositions in our notions of good and evil. Thus the caring

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and nurturing response to the situation of the elderly woman would be euthanasia, which has generally been looked on with moral suspicion. Similarly, Noddings suggests, there are situations in which abortion is justified by circumstances and is therefore not evil. On the other side of the ledger, such traditional female "goods" as childbearing or housekeeping can be evil if their circumstances induce pain, separation, or helplessness.

WHAT we have here and elsewhere in Noddings' analysis is a relativist and "relational" look at evil, with no mention of sin and no clear-cut moral precepts. To determine what is evil, it is necessary first to look at the evil in ourselves, in others, and in the world. Then, using our caring and empathetic skills and Noddings' criteria, we can decide in each case what will cause the least unnecessary pain, separation, or helplessness to ourselves and/or to others. Women are better equipped than men to engage in this process; they are relational by nature and more attuned to human sympathies. They deal with evil as it needs to be dealt with—from a human rather than divine perspective.

Noddings' theodicy relativizes God in the same way as it relativizes evil. Her god is a fallible god, one who is, like us, wrestling with evil: he "controls just so much and is perhaps still struggling toward an ethical vision."

> This sort of god—lovable and understandable to women—may be unattractive to many men because he cannot make absolute claims on us for worship, obedience, and authority, or if he makes such claims, we might be justified in challenging him and even charging the claim to his wicked or unfinished side. A fallible god shakes the entire hierarchy and endangers men in their relations to women, children, and animals and the whole living environment.

The claim of *Women and Evil*, then, is that we have got the God/evil problem wrong because we've been thinking about it all wrong. Power, hierarchies, authority, absolute right or wrong, pure essences of goodness and justice—these only exist in a male world. The truth is that everything, including god, is fallible (though one might wonder how that itself could be *the* truth if truth itself is fallible).

With her theodicy established, Noddings proceeds to discussions of pain (as "natural evil"), war, and terrorism and torture. She continues to emphasize differences in male/female perspectives. Were women in charge, she suggests, wars would be far less likely to break out. Women naturally do not want to see their sons and husbands killed; to the extent they have supported war in the past, it has been because they were supporting their men's causes. But terrorism and torture would not necessarily disappear. They might still be employed by women in certain cases; a woman might resort to torture, for example, to force a person to disclose where her captive child was being held. In general, however, the suggestion is that if women ran the world, things would be not just different, but better.

NODDINGS' concluding chapter, "Educating for a Morality of Evil," discloses her not unexpected suggestions for the future. With a vision typical of utopian "theologians" whose only real faith is in this-worldly peace and happiness, Noddings proposes that we give women power, and let women, and the femininity in men, rule. If women are allowed to be themselves, without being oppressed by men, and if in their naturally caring and concerned and nurturing manner, they are allowed to restructure education, politics, ethical systems, and religion—then the world can be morally transformed. And then, presumably, the fallible god will look down from a fallible heaven and be happy with what she sees. Finally.

Although maybe not. For all her hopes for new education, Noddings ends her book with the observation that optimism and progress are also male ideas; women, by contrast, have a tragic sense of life. But while we cannot hope to overcome evil, she writes, we can, through the influence of women, at least lessen it, and live so as to "give and take what joy we can from each other."

This book is not without strengths. Noddings has some perceptive insights into the very real differences between women and men and into the social differences these personal differences make. Nor can one reject out of hand her arguments concerning the historical truth of women's oppression.

But it is a comment on the impoverished state of theology today that her arguments should be received with *theological* seriousness. Can her fallible, struggling god possibly satisfy? Does it make sense to leap from the recognition of paradox and mystery to the conclusion that truth must not exist and that there can be no transcendent good and just God? It would be regrettable if on the basis of Noddings' efforts readers reached the conclusion that women's intellects are indeed so flawed that they cannot grasp the idea of an absolute. One hopes that non-sexist readers (of both sexes) will reject that possibility, and that the devout among them will offer a good-hearted and caring prayer for Noddings and for those who take her book seriously.

The Fate of Republicanism

REVOLT AGAINST DESTINY: AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. BY PAUL A. CARTER. *Columbia University Press. 331 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Mark A. Noll**

THE only thing really wrong about this thought-provoking book is its

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subtitle. Whatever else it may be—and it is actually several fine things—it is not "an intellectual history of the United States." Not to demean the genre of intellectual history, but Carter's *Revolt Against Destiny* is a good bit more engaging than much that passes under that banner. A properly explanatory subtitle would have read something like "Meditations in Rough Chronological Order on the Fate of Republicanism in the United States." This adjustment would have made it clearer what Carter—who teaches at the University of Arizona and who has written learnedly on the eras of Grant, Coolidge, and Eisenhower, as well as on such disparate subjects as Antarctica and science fiction—was up to.

As it is, we are well into the book before Carter's purpose is readily apparent, but once clarified, admiration for the book's lucid prose and for the author's wit grows also into appreciation for his wisdom. The thesis appears at the end of the second chapter. After describing the hopes of those who wrote the Constitution, Carter takes note of the assumption that almost all men of affairs in the eighteenth century shared about the fate of governments like the one proposed in Philadelphia. Republics proclaiming liberty, this conventional wisdom held, were doomed to become empires of practicing tyranny. They were haunted by "Caesar's ghost," and they were inevitably fated to cry out, at moments of unusual strain, for the Napoleonic "man on a tall horse" who could cut through the delays and legal niceties of popular government to curb anarchy and restore national purpose. Precariously susceptible to the blandishments of aristocratic right and demagogic left, republics were destined to go down.

If decline is the destiny of republics, the United States, Carter argues, has been in revolt against that destiny, at least so far. "The dramatic tension in [the] unfolding story [of the United States] comes from seeing the ghost of Caesar rise again and again and watching Americans cheat destiny, preserving their republicanism in spite of events that seem sure to send them down the road to empire—until the latest bout with destiny, in which we ourselves have been actors." With this thesis stated, Carter then proceeds to show how various events (like the Civil War), conditions (like the closing of the frontier), ideas (like popular views of religion and science), and personalities (like Presidents and cultural arbiters) have challenged, imperiled, undermined, stretched, invigorated, defended, or nourished that republican tradition. The result is a serious essay on the tortuous, but still surviving, course of democratic, anti-despotic self-government in the United States.

A serious essay, yes, but not a heavy-handed one, for Carter is as quick with the scintillating quotation or the witty aside as he is with the wise development of his theme. Native Americans, he points out, learned very early how to get along with the well-armed *banditti* from Europe: "Tell the strangers what they want to hear; this will get them temporarily away from our previously untroubled villages. Yes, the gold or the Great Khan or the Fountain of Youth is just down the road a little way." And literary romanticism would always have a different flavor in the U.S. than in Great Britain, where "the English lake country which inspired Wordsworth and his friends did not open out into endless wilderness; while tramping across it you were never very far from a hot meal, a clean bed, and a bath." In a book filled with apt quotation, perhaps the most poignant is the barb of Federalist Josiah Quincy with which he described Thomas Jefferson's vision for America: "Democracy," said Quincy, is "an Indian word, signifying 'a great tobacco planter, who has herds of black slaves.' "

As for his argument, Carter writes learnedly about the most notable crises of American republicanism, especially the Constitutional period, the Civil War, and the New Deal. He praises the generation of John Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison for its courage in attempting to establish a *permanent* republic. Then with a fine sense of historical irony he describes how the development of a party system, which embodied the very "factionalism" that Washington above all felt would bring down the republic, gave the nation "a mechanism of . . . self-criticism and self-correction" that, for all its descent into inanity, has somehow served the cause of republicanism well.

When he comes to the crises of the Civil War, Carter takes pains to elaborate John C. Calhoun's defense of liberty over union and Lincoln's defense of union over liberty. But what most impresses Carter about the conflict between the states was its effect on the republican ideal. He notes the irony that the Confederacy, in order to save republicanism as it had come to understand it, transformed its own government into a more vigorous and more comprehensive agent of control than Washington had ever been when it seemed to threaten so directly the liberties of South Carolina and its sister slaveholding states. Next he suggests that while Lincoln bent the Constitution to save the union, he was succeeded by leaders who, however questionable in competence or morals, did not fundamentally disturb the republican equation. "Whatever one thinks of the series of Civil War generals who were elected presidents of the United States for the following quarter century, not one of those bearded Republican old duffers remotely resembled Caesar."

When Carter writes about responses to the Depression, he makes less of both FDR's creative innovations and his dastardly deviations than the polemicists of that era did. Rather, he depicts Roosevelt as a major force in shifting the historic roles of the two political parties, whereby Democrats abandoned the habits of nineteenth-century individualism for "a spiteful and ultimately self-destructive protectionism" and Republicans traded the moral paternalism of nineteenth-century Whigs for a "narrow and doctrinaire brand of 'free enterprise.' " On such standard themes of American political economy, Carter is illuminating but

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not particularly original.

The book's distinctive contribution lies, rather, in other areas. Carter is especially astute in tracing the interconnections between Roman and Judeo-Christian themes in the national past. He writes shrewdly on the intellectual alternatives to traditional religion that have arisen in the course of our history. And he describes with unusual sensitivity the ecological dimensions of American republicanism.

One of the special strengths of the book is Carter's ability to show how religion has, on balance, strengthened the republican tradition. Along the way he does, to be sure, slander the Calvinism that constituted the central core of early American religion (it had "outrageous doctrines," fostered "harsh usages," and was an "oppressive faith"). At the same time, Carter also respects the way that this Calvinism, along with other supposedly reactionary beliefs (Catholic, evangelical Protestant, and Jewish), fostered the deep sense of personal moral responsibility without which republicanism would never have been possible. He also notes that it was a variant of the Calvinist creed which, during the nation's deepest crisis, sustained the one whom Carter calls "A. Lincoln, Theologian." Carter pays considerable attention to the force of the Bible in America, both where least expected (e.g., FDR's first inaugural) as well as where most expected (e.g., the voluntary societies that civilized the wilderness during the early national period). And he writes with empathy (though not agreement) about the humane populism that inspired William Jennings Bryan's crusade against evolution. The religious dimensions of American republicanism, Carter holds, deserve much of the credit for retarding the slide of republicanism into imperialism.

ON *that* subject—the threat of republican decline—Carter has compiled an intriguing catalogue of commentators who have drawn parallels between the history of Rome and the history of the United States. Most of these authorities predicted that America would follow the Roman move from republic to benevolent empire to despotic imperialism. Much of Carter's most intelligent analysis concerns the reasons why this move has not yet taken place, or at least why lapses toward imperialism have been episodic and momentary, rather than irreversible.

The way in which the growth of science has related to the republican ideal is a major theme in the last half of the book. Carter notes that many in the early heyday of the new university at the end of the nineteenth century felt that science on a large scale would require socialistic government on a large scale. What actually developed, instead, was the military-industrial complex, an arrangement with its own threats to republicanism. Carter hails the vigilance of conscientious guardians like President Eisenhower, who pointed out the collusive dangers of this threat, and commends their wisdom to the ardent militarists of the Reagan years.

A different set of strains attended the expansion of social science. Carter appreciates the learning and good will of influential theorists like John Dewey. But because he also believes that a religious point of reference is necessary for the healthy functioning of republicanism, Carter describes with telling insight the central dilemma of the social science ideal: "Pragmatic social democracy such as John Dewey professed had set itself an all-but-impossible intellectual goal: to revalidate, in acceptable modern scientific terms, a kind of politics that had been founded upon truths held to be self-evident, while denying on scientific grounds that *anything* can be self-evidently true."

Carter writes most movingly when he writes about the West. If there is a hero in the book, it is John Wesley Powell, early explorer of the Grand Canyon, long-time and influential head of the United States Geological Survey, and ardent conservationist. Powell, who combined respect for scientific rigor, natural grandeur, and republican ideals, seems to embody the virtues that Carter also holds most dear. Carter's fascination with the West leads him on to learned discussion of Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis" (which, despite flaws, Carter holds to be the most influential statement ever by a historian of America), along with the views of Russian ecologists, American social scientists, and a wide variety of conservationists. The connections between Carter's keen sense for nature and natural resources, on the one hand, and the history of republicanism, on the other, are not always as clear as they might be. The implicit claim, however, seems to be that just as religion provides a necessary moral ballast for the republican ideal, so does a healthy respect for the natural realm.

IN the end, *Revolt Against Destiny* summons to reflection as much as to engagement. The book does not display, for example, the wounded zeal of John Patrick Diggins' *Lost Soul of American Politics*. While Carter is no less impressed than Diggins with the virtues of hereditary religion and the importance of debating Locke's place in the republican tradition, he is much more sanguine about the possibility of adding the strengths of liberalism to the virtues of republicanism. And while Carter has kind words for the socialist impulse, he finds its value as a counter-balancing corrective to the opposing excesses of unchecked individualism.

The book's virtues are like those found in some other works by seasoned historians. Such people know too much about the past to believe in easy solutions to current problems. They resist the ideological quick-fix, partly from disposition, but also from having observed how easily flaming ideologues consume the structures they intend to save as well as those they struggle against. Yet along with the best historians, Carter's instinct draws him to issues of deepest significance. In his case it is the nobility, but also the fragility, of the republican ideal—the notion that human virtue, however compromised, might truly establish a polity of freedom; and that a polity of freedom, however human, might

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truly encourage virtue. Carter's admiration for that republican ideal is extraordinary. His account of why it has survived so long is compelling.

The Transcendent in the Mundane

ORDINARY TIME. BY A. G. MOJTABAI. *Doubleday. 223 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by **Jill Baumgaertner**

A. G. MOJTABAI'S nonfiction work, *Blessed Assurance,* won the 1986 Lillian Smith Award for the best book about the American South. Now, in her fifth novel, *Ordinary Time,* in prose as clean and spare as the landscape which is its setting, she further explores the territory. Mojtabai draws her characters in relief against the dryness of the land in the brilliance of a Texas sun. Durance is every small town one has ever known—and it is here, in the ordinary, Mojtabai seems to suggest, that the transcendent must be found, if it is discoverable at all.

Ordinary time is, in a sense, uncommitted time. In the church year, it refers to the time between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday and also between Pentecost and Advent. It is, in the mind of Father Gilvary, the only priest in Durance, "the flatland of time . . . the time between the Times." Father Gilvary has learned to dread it, particularly the ordinary times of summer heaviness and heat, times also of spiritual drought and inertia. Sometimes the sun is so bright that the Son cannot be seen.

Christ is a brooding presence in this book—in fact, the invisible protagonist—and each of the four major characters struggles in some way with that presence or, as the case may be, that perceived absence.

Henrietta, a widow, opens a restaurant so that she can fill the empty spaces of her life. Hers is a fluid identity in a rigid landscape. She both wants more and is ready to give more than she has been given. In her loneliness she talks to the four dolls she has arranged in her bedroom. She has been saved, she claims, several times. Now at fifty-seven, she considers herself "still slippery," although she prays that she will not backslide again. After her husband's death she changed churches and is now a member of the Rooftree Pentecostal Church. Recently, however, Henrietta has not been able to bring herself to answer Brother Shad's altar calls.

Her restaurant is, in many respects, an answer to prayer, and it is in this establishment that Val, a transient, finds work. Val is desperately attempting to recover his memory, but when bits and pieces of it begin to come to him, he frantically moves on. When he begins to discover just who he is, he finds he must once again escape himself and any connections with anyone who might bring him to himself. An American Adam, Val travels further and further west, on an ostensible journey of self-discovery that actually becomes self-evasion.

CLETE is an unloved young man of unknown parentage, who in his off-kilter, schizophrenic way is attracted to Val. Much like Enoch Emery in Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood,* Clete craves human contact, at any cost. Val violently spurns him, and the priest for whom Clete occasionally works cannot provide him with satisfactory answers to his questions. But then the aging Father Gilvary, who had hoped to find his final home in his dwindling parish, has his own problems. Recently, he has discovered that he is going blind. His doctor has advised him to plan his future carefully, to work out the details in advance. But Father Gilvary, who will soon be reading not by daylight but by "fingerlight," does not want to be blind just yet. He feels that "to practice blindness in advance seems as wrong . . . as to extinguish a lagging, yet still beating heart. He wants, instead, to be fully present at this time." So he ministers to others even when he longs in his moment of crisis to be ministered to. He wants a hand other than his own to be placed in blessing on his forehead. Praying, however, is difficult; he cannot concentrate. He cannot even get the words out. Likewise, Henrietta has recently caught herself praying, "Lord, I am a swimmer" when she really meant to say, "Lord, I am a sinner." This inability of *Ordinary Time*'s characters to communicate with each other and with God is dramatized by separate interior monologues that reveal their isolation in a claustrophobic environment.

"Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief" is the underlying theme of this beautifully executed book. In spite of the bleak physical and spiritual landscape, there are O'Connoresque signs of God's presence in Durance, and of His people's willingness to find Him, however He may appear. Henrietta goes to a Christian dentist who prays before he fills a tooth. There is a Christian office-supply store in town, and the Everlasting Arms soup kitchen where the message of the preacher is that "God sees." He may not be acting in Durance, but He is certainly seeing. He even manifests Himself occasionally, not always in fundamentalist trappings. One day the cook at Fong's Golden Skillet sees the Virgin Mary in her frying pan. Asked by reporters to respond, Father Gilvary is at first nonplussed, but says, "The Mother of God in a frying pan? . . . And what is that supposed to mean to us? . . . That Mrs. Knighton's labor is blessed? Of course it is. Maybe the best miracle is Ellen Knighton thinking about the Queen of Heaven while working in a hot kitchen all day long." The transcendent is encountered in the mundane.

Val notices that the want-ads in the local paper are filled with desires and losses. The prayers and supplications of Mojtabai's ordinary people multiply and their struggles continue. Father Gilvary, Henrietta, Val, and Clete may think they are alone. But by the end of the novel one begins to see that perhaps they are not whistling in the dark. And the season of Advent is upon them.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

LIBERAL ARTS AND COMMUNITY: THE FEEDING OF THE LARGER BODY. BY MARION MONTGOMERY. *Louisiana State University Press. 170 pp. $27.50.*

GRACEFUL AND erudite essays aimed at recovering the liberal arts for the sustaining of community that is formed by an understanding of the good. As for subjects treated, almost everything under the sun is here. The professor emeritus of English at the University of Georgia has produced a book of wisdom, a companion and guide for those prepared to follow the form of thought that becomes meditation.

A THIEF IN THE NIGHT: THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF POPE JOHN PAUL I. BY JOHN CORNWELL. *Simon and Schuster. 366 pp. $21.95.*

JOHN PAUL I died only thirty-three days into his pontificate, and rumors almost immediately circulated that dirty work was afoot. The rumors were exploited in a sensationalist manner in several books, notably David Yallop's *In God's Name*, suggesting that the pope had been murdered. It's a juicy story, and English journalist Cornwell is not above indulging gratuitous breathlessness in telling it, but *A Thief in the Night* is a carefully researched book that convincingly lays fantastical rumors to rest. His depiction of pettiness, intrigue, and mendacity in the Vatican will, and should, trouble those in positions of church leadership.

THE IMPERATIVE OF MODERNITY: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET. BY ROCKWELL GRAY. *University of California Press. 424 pp. $29.95.*

WHEN HE died in 1955 at age 72, Ortega was recognized throughout the Western world as one of the leading liberal humanists of the twentieth century, but he was uncertainly at home in his native Spain. In books such as *The Revolt of the Masses* readers encountered literary splendor and freshness of expression, although many were left unsure whether anything substantively new had been said. Mr. Gray's is a model of intellectual biography, sympathetically yet critically limning the self-consciousness of a thinker who knew that he did not belong to the time to which he had been born, and found solace in the belief that such is the fate of all who live seriously the life of the mind. Ortega's religious beliefs, or lack thereof, continue to be a matter of controversy. From the present work one infers that he lived "a-Catholically" more as a subtle but powerful protest against the Francoist version of Catholic Spain than as a necessary consequence of his beliefs.

SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE: COMPROMISE AND INTEGRITY IN ETHICS AND POLITICS. BY MARTIN BENJAMIN. *University Press of Kansas. 195 pp. $12.95 paper.*

A CALM AND civilized argument for the proposition that, in the political task, compromise is not morally compromising. Benjamin is persuasive in saying that a demand for "moral purity" can end up with leaving the political task to the morally indifferent or unscrupulous, but his treatment of compromise comes dangerously close to relaxing the public pressure rightly applied to politicians who, in any case, will usually end up by compromising. To his credit, the author takes on the hard question of compromise in the conflict over abortion. Not all readers will share his admiration for New York's Governor Mario Cuomo as a master of conscientious compromise on that question.

HOW DOES AMERICA HEAR THE GOSPEL? BY WILLIAM A. DRYNESS. *Eerdmans. 164 pp. $11.95 paper.*

A POPULAR cultural analysis treating the ways in which American traits, such as individualism and optimism, hinder the hearing and living of the Christian message. Social gospeller Walter Rauschenbusch and today's television preacher Robert Schuller are employed as instructive case studies.

A CRY FOR JUSTICE: THE CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES SPEAK. EDITED BY ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN AND SYDNEY THOMSON BROWN. *Paulist Press. 223 pp. $8.95.*

A USEFUL summary of statements on "economic justice" issued by Christian and Jewish bodies in recent years. The statements are uniformly redistributionist in import, and the twelve commentaries on the statements, by the editors and others, typically argue that they "do not go far enough." A reader not familiar with the sociology of mainline/oldline religion might be astonished by the insularity of the essays in both tone and substance. That the views propounded are so far removed from current economic thought may, as several writers insist, indicate the "prophetic" nature of religious pronouncements. That claim might be more persuasive if the statements and the commentaries on them gave some hint of familiarity with alternative arguments and evidence. If *A Cry for Justice* is to be believed, it would seem that institutional religion is the last defender of social and economic ideas that almost the entire world is enthusiastically abandoning in favor of democracy and economic freedom.

CONSERVATISM. BY JEROME L. HIMMELSTEIN. *University of California Press. 290 pp. $25.*

A PROFESSOR of sociology at Amherst, who apparently does not deem himself a conservative, offers a self-consciously "balanced" account of conservativism from 1950s marginality to 1990s mainstream. Nothing dramatically new, but a workmanlike analysis, concluding that there is now a "Republican edge," but that it represents gains without a fundamental realignment. The treatment of "the religious right" is fair, if unremarkable.

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Richard John Neuhaus

The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

The Perfectly Raised Consciousness

Reflecting on the rash of outraged protests against allegedly sexist, racist, and homophobic slurs erupting in our public life, *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen tries to get to the root of the matter. It all has to do with "consciousness," or so it seems. Some offenses against approved sensibilities, writes Ms. Quindlen, are attributable to outright bigotry. Others arise from "stupid lapses" on the part of otherwise nice people. "But it also seems to me that there are gradations of imperfectly raised consciousness, and that in speaking of black and white we cannot ignore the gray areas." Now there is a delicious phrase to savor—"imperfectly raised consciousness." The alternative, of course, is a perfectly raised consciousness, presumably much like the consciousness of Ms. Anna Quindlen.

Let PRC stand for perfectly raised consciousness. People in possession of PRC have all the politically correct (PC) views, especially when it comes to "sensitivity" toward people who are different. The PC view, for example, is that opinions are equally valid, except for non-PC opinions held by people lacking PRC. The egalitarian duty of superior people with PRC is to police, punish, and stigmatize their inferiors. The goal, of course, is to raise such people to the elevated level of PRC. People with PRC constitute themselves as the Sensitivity Patrol of contemporary culture. They are deadly serious about this. Sensitivity is not optional. To those of imperfectly raised consciousness (IRC) they say in tones most ominous: "You vill be sensitive. Ve haff vays of making you sensitive."

The Sensitivity Patrol is very active also in our churches. Consider, for instance, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It has 5.3 million members and is probably the most thoroughly quota-ized religious organization in the country. At every level, leadership slots are filled according to gender, race, language, and ethnicity (the push for including "sexual preference" has not gotten very far, as yet). There are categories for people of color (POCs) and for people with primary language other than English (PLOTEs). The church's commission on multicultural sensitivity actually proposes that people filling such quota slots be called POCs and PLOTEs. By getting used to using these terms, it is said, IRC persons will get over the insensitivity of resenting the fact that others hold positions because of their color or deficiencies in English. Thus can IRC persons be ratcheted up another notch toward PRC.

But the ELCA's Sensitivity Patrol also has more active measures. It has recently been mandated that all the church's personnel must participate in "cultural/racial awareness training and education" (CRATE). (We are told that it was going to be called the "cultural/racial awareness program," but an official with a high acronym consciousness caught that one just in time.) CRATE is of course run by PRCs and is described by them as "a creative new way into the future." Officials—bishops, division directors, editors, and other grown-ups—are scheduled for intensive self-criticism workshops in order to discover and confess their sins against "multicultural literacy." For obdurate cases of IRC, there are continuing self-criticism sessions of escalating intensity. Officials who have been CRATEd to date, it is reported, have expressed appreciation for the experience. A Southwestern bishop who participated in a regional version of CRATE has publicly stated his gratitude for being helped to see that he is racist. That came to him as a surprise because he had always held PC views on race, but the self-criticism sessions revealed to him the degree to which he had been infected by the systemic racism of the society—an infection

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insidiously hidden by his long-standing opposition to racism.

While the Lutherans may be the first completely CRATEd church, we are assured by numerous reports that the Sensitivity Patrol is making heartening progress on other fronts, notably in academe. Needless to say, some professors, like some bishops, resist the truth that beneath their liberal pieties are concealed ghastly residues of imperfectly raised consciousness. The skilled inquisitors of PRC, however, have a remarkable record of success in breaking down such resistance. There is every reason to believe that Anna Quindlen and other pioneers of the movement to control imperfect thoughts can look forward to a fully CRATEd culture in the foreseeable future.

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ANDY ROONEY AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

So Andy Rooney's suspension from *60 Minutes* was cut short, and we may be inclined to think that all's well that ends well. But there are aspects of the incident worth remembering. Rooney's suspension by CBS News stirred up an awful storm in which some questions of moral moment made an occasional appearance. It will be recalled that Mr. Rooney incurred the wrath of homosexual activists when he said on the program that "homosexual union"—along with too much alcohol, too much food, drugs, and cigarettes—is "known to lead quite often to premature death." But the storm really broke when *The Advocate*, a newspaper by and for homosexuals, quoted Rooney as saying that blacks have "watered down their genes because the less intelligent ones are the ones that have the most children." Rooney denied saying that, and indeed declared such a view to be deeply repugnant to him. There was no tape, so it was his word against the interviewer's. The head of CBS News suspended him, declaring that "CBS News cannot tolerate such remarks or anything that approximates such comments." What might "approximate" such comments was left unclear. Thinking them but not saying them? Failing to punch in the nose someone who does say them?

Among the many comments generated by the incident, we were struck by Walter Goodman's in the *New York Times*, "Why Andy Rooney Had to Go, Guilty or Not." Goodman opined, "As for Mr. Rooney, he is doing the required penance for an inflammatory remark that he did or did not utter." Justice, it seems, is entirely beside the point. It must be made clear, Mr. Goodman wrote, that "television will make no slurs against any minority nor associate itself with anyone who might have made such a slur anywhere at any time, if the minority is of a size to cause it trouble." This is the kind of censorship necessary for television, he says, "and, whatever the justice of [Rooney's] punishment, he can take comfort in having served as a sacrifice to the cause of public tranquility."

If television were to exclude anyone who anywhere at any time uttered a sentiment that some minority deemed to be a slur, the entire industry would shut down tonight. Goodman adds the condition that the minority be of a size to cause trouble. One may be forgiven for thinking immediately of two large minorities that, in combination, probably comprise a majority of Americans—Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants. Not "anywhere at any time," but in network studios at prime time, slurs against both are hardly infrequent. Maybe they should both cause more trouble about it. And maybe not. But the fact is that Mr. Goodman and CBS are trading in very selective indignation about real or alleged slurs.

Although most Americans do not like the word, it is true that censorship, including self-censorship, is necessary to maintaining civility in the public square. And it is true that network television qualifies as a public square. But there is a difference between civilized censorship and spineless pandering to ideological terrorists, which is what the more aggressive homosexual activists have become. There are profound reasons, underscored by much pain and no little blood, why all Americans, not only blacks, are and should be particularly sensitive to slurs against blacks. But to allow a superannuated civil rights establishment to debase public discourse by vetoing honest discussion of problems, real or perceived, between whites and blacks is not civility but cowardice. Mr. Goodman's "public tranquility" is the stillness of cynical mendacity.

And then there was the question of justice for Andy Rooney. Punishing people "guilty or not" is not, as we understand it, the American way. What Rooney is supposed to have said about blacks is both offensive and dumb. But he says he never said it, and he explicitly repudiates the sentiments attributed to him. One would have more respect for the head of CBS News if he had come out and said that he did not believe Mr. Rooney. If he did not believe him, why not say so? Perhaps it is cynical of us to suspect that CBS thought that a returning Andy Rooney who exudes contrition for the "approximation" of a slur might still be a valuable entertainment property, while Andy Rooney tagged as a liar by CBS would be of no use to *60 Minutes*. Perhaps. We do not know the motives of all the players in this sordid incident. We do know that, contra Walter Goodman and others who defended the action of CBS, public tranquility will not be served by a cultivated

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disregard for the difference between truth and falsehood.

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THE BISHOP DECEIVED

Poor John Spong, Episcopal bishop of Newark, NJ. No sooner had he once again demonstrated himself a champion of liberation from the putatively oppressive Christian tradition than the object of his radical largesse went and betrayed him. At the turn of the year, it may be remembered, Bishop Spong made headlines beyond numbering when he ordained J. Robert Williams, a professed and practicing homosexual, to the priesthood. "Robert would not live a lie," declared Spong. Demonstrating the point, Mr. Williams shortly thereafter announced to a church gathering that celibacy is a kind of perversion, that monogamy (whether in hetero or homo unions) is a life-denying restriction, and that Mother Teresa of Calcutta would be a more whole person if she had sex from time to time. (The last point was made in language that we are not permitted in a family journal.)

Spong declared himself bitterly disappointed, and charged that Williams had deceived both him and the examining committees that had approved his ordination. Williams' comments on monogamy and celibacy, Spong complained, "confirmed the worst fears of many prejudiced people" that homosexuals are incapable of anything but "predatory or casual sexual behavior." Mr. Williams, the man who will not live a lie, had a different view. He had been "used" by Spong, said he. "He wanted the perfect gay priest, a cardboard cutout, with lover in tow, to trot out on state occasions, to trot out and say, 'Look how liberal we are!'"

We don't know who deceived whom, or even if there was deception involved, but Mr. Williams does sound like an honest, if woefully wrongheaded, fellow. On the other hand, maybe he did deceive Bishop Spong. If so, it is obvious from what the bishop said before, during, and after the ordination that he dearly wanted to be deceived.

FT

INWARD/OUTWARD CATHOLICS

Initiatives is published by the National Center for the Laity and has a usually interesting way of cutting across the left/right divides in both church and culture. For instance, *Initiatives* is critical of "A Call for Reform in the Catholic Church," a manifesto sponsored by Call to Action, the National Association for a Married Priesthood, Women's Ordination Conference, and other groups definitely on the left of contemporary Catholicism. The sponsors have run the manifesto as a huge ad in the *New York Times* and elsewhere, and are seeking 100,000 signatures. That seems a modest goal. One hundred thousand is less than one-fifth of one percent of the Catholics in the United States, which might confirm some church authorities in their belief that that is about the percentage of Catholics supporting the agenda of the manifesto. "A Call for Reform" bears the signature of such as Fr Matthew Fox, the New Age enthusiast, but has also been endorsed by a few who are thought to be more centrist, such as Fr David Tracy of the University of Chicago and at least one bishop.

The manifesto is intended to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of "The Church in the Modern World," the last document promulgated at the Second Vatican Council. But, says *Initiatives*, the entire point of that document was to direct the church's attention "outward" to service in the world, while "A Call to Reform" is an "inward" complaint about what's wrong with the church. The manifesto is an "appeal to the institutional Church . . . to open the priesthood to women and married men . . . to allow laity, religious, and clergy to participate in the selection of local bishops," etc. etc. In its inward-looking complaints, according to *Initiatives*, the Call is of a piece with such "extremist" voices on the right as *The Wanderer*, which sees itself as the scourge of myriad liberalisms, real or imagined.

Initiatives also takes to task *The Wanderer*'s counterpart on the left, the *National Catholic Reporter*. That paper claims to cover "the news from a unique angle—the angle where church and world intersect." But that is precisely what *NCR* often fails to do. *Initiatives* notes, for instance, that *NCR* had not one paragraph before, during, or after Lech Walesa's visit to the United States some months ago. In a whirlwind tour, the Nobel laureate who is democracy's champion in Poland, received the Medal of Freedom from President Bush, addressed a joint session of Congress, spoke to his fellow trade unionists in the AFL-CIO, went to New York to engage questions about Polish-Jewish relations, and there was complete silence from the paper that claims "to cover the news from the angle where church and world intersect."

Walesa, says *Initiatives*, is a Catholic who exemplifies what was called for in "The Church in the Modern World." But he is of limited interest to such as *NCR* and the sponsors of "A Call For Reform" because he is an orthodox Catholic who shows no interest in advancing revolutionary change

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within the Roman Catholic Church. Walesa would undoubtedly agree with the conclusion offered by *Initiatives:* "None of the institution's faults (real or imagined, grating to conservatives or liberals) prevents any Catholic from doing God's work in the world—as a mother, a business executive, a union official, a farmer, a diplomat, or a nurse."

Of course attention must be paid to the inward renewal of all our religious institutions. But *Initiatives* is right: It does seem odd that those Roman Catholics who talk incessantly about the church serving the world are so caught up in internal disputes about institutional change. And it is doubly odd when the "reforms" they call for (e.g., ordaining women, lay participation in electing bishops) are familiar practices in the oldline Protestant churches that are notable neither for their "inward" vitality nor for their "outward" influence in the world. (*Initiatives* is available from the National Center for the Laity, 1 E. Superior St., Chicago, IL 60611.)

FT

Cuomo's Challenge

The editors of *America,* the Jesuit weekly, are full of admiration for Governor Mario Cuomo of New York. They are, therefore, understandably distressed that contoversy continues to swirl around his determined efforts to explain how he can be both a faithful Roman Catholic and a proponent of abortion on demand. Their distress was deepened by the pastoral observation of Bishop Austin Vaughan, auxiliary of New York, that the governor may be in danger of going to hell if he continues to countenance the mortal sin of abortion, which Vatican Council II called an "unspeakable crime." Bishop Vaughan was supported in principle by John Cardinal O'Connor, who praised Vaughan as a theologian and noted that he had a right and perhaps an obligation to say what he said.

Differing with the Cardinal, the editors claim that the "bottom line" is justice, and they cite Martin Luther King, Jr., to the effect that "justice is indivisible." The gravamen of the editorial is justice for Mario Cuomo and, although the point is obliquely made, they leave no doubt about their concern that such justice has everything to do with the governor's future—his political future, if not his eternal destiny. The governor runs for reelection this year, and is widely rumored to have his eye on the 1992 Democratic nomination. "If [justice] must be accorded to the unborn child, as it must," the editors write, "it must also be accorded to the mother, and, yes, even to the Catholic politician who tries to balance competing rights and claims in a pluralistic society. And if that politician is a just person, then his or her political fortunes are not a nugatory consideration." While we should no doubt seek to do justice to all concerned, one cannot help but note the dramatic disparities between what is at stake for the unborn child, the mother, and the politician.

Echoing an editorial line sometimes taken by the *New York Times,* the editors worry about the future of Catholics in American political life. If the bishops persist in pressing them on abortion, Catholic politicians will either be "precluded from holding high public office, because attacked by their own church's officials and otherwise harassed by their coreligionists," or else, if they are elected, it will be "precisely because they are portrayed by coreligionists as renegades from the church." The editors doubt that "either of these outcomes would be regarded as satisfactory by church officials." But surely there are other alternatives. There is the alternative that, to his credit, has been attempted by Governor Cuomo, namely, to make a reasoned public case for the compatibility of his moral convictions and his political position on abortion. In the judgment of many people, he has not succeeded in that attempt to date. But that only means he should try harder.

Among Catholic politicians, Cuomo is the most prominent proponent of the position described as "Personally opposed, but . . ." With the help of liberal theologian Richard McBrien of Notre Dame, he attempted a definitive articulation of that argument in 1984. Key to that argument is the important distinction between what is moral and what is legal (an important distinction indeed), and the need for a "consensus" in order to move toward the greater legal protection of unborn children. Critics, including those friendly to Cuomo's political ambitions, have insistently pointed out that he does not passively await the formation of a consensus on other issues about which he cares deeply, notably capital punishment. He has actively, if unsuccessfully, tried to persuade the public to adopt his moral opposition to capital punishment, and has used his office to veto capital punishment bills clearly supported by a popular consensus. Yet, when it comes to abortion, he seems to declare himself impotent in influencing public opinion, and indeed has on several occasions appeared to pledge his personal and official support for the abortion policy countenanced by the 1973 ruling, *Roe v. Wade.*

When Cuomo says that there is no consensus, and suggests that there can be no consensus, in support of protecting the unborn, he should perhaps be understood as talking not about society but about the Democratic Party. Certainly at the national level, but also in many states, it is at present the case that that party imposes a rigid demand of orthodoxy on the abortion question. The editors of *America* would be

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on more solid ground if they argued that faithful Catholics might be "precluded" from high office if they are Democrats. What they seem to miss, however, is the potential of Catholics who are Democrats challenging the current orthodoxy of their party. Given the importance of New York State and his presidential possibilities, it would seem that nobody is in a better position to make such a challenge than Governor Mario Cuomo. Would the Democratic Party really want to risk excluding from its ranks Catholics and others who are faithful to their moral convictions? Contra *America*, it is not the bishops but the party that must make the decision whether Catholics are to be "precluded from holding high public office." Politicians such as Mario Cuomo are ideally situated to make that clear.

Regrettably, the governor appears not to have the stomach for it. He evidences irritation when repeatedly asked about his position on abortion, and refers questioners back to his by-now tired and unconvincing 1984 speech at Notre Dame. He recently headed off further questions on the subject by saying, "If you do something that's in accord with a well-formed, sincerely formed belief, without being a theologian, it seems to me any God of good judgment would understand that." As the governor should not have to be reminded, it is not God's judgment that is in question.

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THE EXCITABLE DR. WATSON

The World Economic Forum gathers each year in Davos, Switzerland, and it is a logistical wonder. Getting together more than a hundred heads of state and government ministers, plus top executives of eight hundred of the world's largest corporations, takes no little doing. Conceptually, the meeting ranges well beyond economics and politics, narrowly defined. This writer, for instance, was asked to address the questions of religion and the democratic revolution, a subject of most particular interest in light of dramatic events in Eastern Europe.

Also invited to take on issues other than economics was James Watson, author of *The Double Helix*, Nobel laureate, and director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Dr. Watson led a session at Davos on Science, Technology, and the Limits of Traditional Ethics. What he had to say, or did not have to say, takes on increased importance because, since 1988, he has been Associate Director of the National Institutes of Health and in charge of the Human Genome Project.

That project is, in the view of many, one of the most ambitious and ominous projects in the history of science. Billions of dollars and thousands of scientists are devoted to producing an exhaustive map of the chromosome structure that contains the DNA comprising the genes of human beings. The purpose is not only to decipher such genetic structure, but to alter it, presumably to improve the human condition. Beyond deciphering and altering, it is suggested that the knowledge gained might be put to commercial uses on a scale hardly imaginable at present. (So perhaps Dr. Watson's role might be closer to the narrow notion of a World Economic Forum after all.) It is little wonder that the Human Genome project has, in this country and elsewhere, raised ethical questions of intense urgency.

Although scheduled to address the ethics of these matters, Watson discussed at length the politics and economics of scientific entrepreneurship, including advice on how to induce a nervous Congress to allocate huge sums for an enterprise of doubtful benefit. (Tell them, he chuckled, that it will help all those old people with Alzheimer's.) There is no doubt about Watson's enthusiasm for the science of the project. "So much is happening so fast," he enthused, "that we are in a constant state of excitement and hardly have time to think."

But the people in attendance wanted to think, and, more specifically, wanted to think about the ethics of what is being done and what is being proposed to be done. Dr. Watson was not forthcoming. First, he complained that the discussion of the pertinent ethical questions is today impossibly embroiled in the abortion debate—including issues such as fetal transplants and experimentation, aborting the genetically defective, and so forth. Then he said that, since he is now an official of NIH, "I can say nothing about ethics."

That seemed odd, since the session was billed as a discussion of science, technology, and ethics. Odder still, after saying he had to support the position of the U.S. government, he went on to deplore that position, observing that Dr. Louis Sullivan, Secretary of Health and Human Services, shared his embarrassment over official queasiness about the scientific uses of the unborn dead. Pressed by dissatisfied participants, Watson allowed that workers in the Human Genome Project should not forget the possible abuses of eugenics, such as in the coerced sterilization of thousands in this country in the 1920s. He also acknowledged the eugenic excesses of the Nazi regime. But the gravamen of his presentation was that we should not let these unfortunate episodes distract our attention from what might be possible in the future.

The scientifically excited Dr. Watson gave the impression that the concern about ethics was much to do about very little. Surely, he said, there would be laws that would prevent corporations, insurance companies, and others from prying into people's

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DNA structure. True, courts and other government agencies might have access to such information, but that would involve only "a narrow part of the population." As for altering gene structures, Watson was confident that that would not be done for "trivial reasons." In order to distinguish between the trivial and compelling, he reassured the audience, the government was spending millions to set up boards of ethical experts. Scientists would be inhibited from doing anything wrong or dangerous, he suggested, because everything would have to go through proper committees. The audience was not reassured.

Finally, and obviously somewhat exasperated, Watson asserted, "I'm excited by the science of it. What the rules will be, our elected representatives will have to decide, and we will have to abide by them." He added that he was generally opposed to general rules, since what is or is not ethical is up to individuals to decide.

It was a most undistinguished and troubling performance. The combination of technological enthusiasm and moral insouciance left participants asking one another how Watson had convinced himself—as he said he is convinced—that he is successfully selling the Human Genome Project to the public. Many thoughtful citizens, including eminent scientists, oppose the deciphering and altering of the human gene structure, and are appalled by the proposed commercial uses of knowledge gained from such activities. The questions raised about this project drive to the heart of what it means to be human. Here, perhaps more than at any point in human history, we encounter the prospect of man becoming the object and means of a science that has become its own end. This, it is not alarmist to think, is Science proposing to make man in its own image.

If any part of the Human Genome Project is to be done at all, one might wish it were directed by someone who takes time off from scientific excitements to give careful thought to what it is that he and his colleagues are proposing to do. Many sessions at Davos addressed worrying questions. But none was so worrying as the session at which James Watson complacently intimated that there is no cause for worry.

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ONE-GENERATION JEWS?

From a Jewish viewpoint, there are troubling aspects about people converting to Judaism. For instance, many of them may turn out to be "one-generation Jews," with no Jewish parents and no Jewish children. This is among the questions pondered by Jonathan Sarna of Brandeis University in "Reform Jewish Leaders, Intermarriage, and Conversion." Not that Sarna is alarmist about the future of Judaism. In fact he begins by recalling a perdurance that has defied the prophets of Judaism's demise. "Back in 1818, Attorney General William Wirt, one of the finest attorneys general in America's history, wondered in a private letter whether persecutions of the Jews, for all of their unhappy effects, perhaps held the key to Jewish unity. 'I believe,' he wrote to John Myers of Norfolk, Virginia, 'that if those persecutions had never existed the Jews would have melted down into the general mass of the people of the world.' He went on to suggest that if persecutions came to an end, the 'children of Israel' might even then cease to exist as a separate nation. Within 150 years he was sure that they would be indistinguishable from the rest of mankind.

"Now, more than 150 years later, we know that Wirt was wrong: the Jewish people lives on. The relationship that Wirt posited between persecutions and Jewish identity may not be wrong, but to date, we have never had the opportunity to find out. Meanwhile, prophecies of doom have continued unabated. *Look* magazine some years ago featured a cover story on the 'Vanishing American Jew.' *Look* itself has since vanished, not just once but twice, and the Jewish people lives on. A volume entitled *The End of the Jewish People,* by the French sociologist George Friedman, has also come and gone."

Nonetheless, Sarna is concerned. It is estimated that 2 percent of America's 5.7 million Jews, or 115,000 men and women, are converts. Predictably, most converts bring with them an understanding of religion shaped, however vaguely, by Christianity. That means that the ethnic or "peoplehood" dimension of Judaism is downplayed, and the "spiritual" dimension emphasized. Some way must be found, says Sarna, to help converts understand that Jewish "faith" cannot be separated from allegiance to the people who are Judaism. "Bitter experience should have taught us that these principles are sacred; whenever Jews have not been responsible for one another, tragedy has resulted."

Converts typically call themselves "Jews by Choice," and Sarna appreciates the great contribution they have made to contemporary Jewish life. Yet the accent on choice is also connected with the fact that 80 percent of converts or those married to converts are very favorably disposed toward intermarriage. Studies show that many converts would not discourage their children from marrying someone who was not Jewish. In one Reform leadership study, Sarna notes, "more than 50 percent of the converts responding—leaders, I remind you—would not even be bothered a great deal if their children *converted to Christianity*" (emphasis his). This is an attitude very different from that of born

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Jews. "If today," Sarna writes, "when most Jewish parents still disapprove of intermarriage, we have such a significant intermarriage rate, tomorrow, when a substantial number will not disapprove, I fear that the figures will be very bleak indeed."

This leads him to his key point: "Let us make no mistake; the data we now have at hand should serve as a dire warning: *Unless we act decisively, many of today's converts will be one-generation Jews—Jews with non-Jewish parents and non-Jewish children.*" But Sarna concludes on a note that most Jews would find more hopeful: "Learned Jews and non-Jews have been making dire predictions about the future (or end) of the Jewish people for literally thousands of years—long before William Wirt and long after him—and, as we have seen, their predictions have proved consistently wrong. The reason, I think, has nothing to do with the quality of our prophets, but is rather to the credit of those who listened to them. Refusing to consider the future preordained, clearheaded Jews have always acted to avert the perils they were warned against, and in every case, to a greater or lesser extent, they were successful: the Jewish people lived on."

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ART IS NOT PROPAGANDA

Franky Schaeffer, an evangelical writer and moviemaker, is every bit as straightforward in reproaching fellow Christians as was his father, the late Francis Schaeffer. *Sham Pearls for Real Swine* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt) takes its title from Winston Churchill's observation that his public school was a place "where sham pearls were fed to real swine." Among the discontents agitating Mr. Schaeffer is Christian ignorance of the importance and integrity of the arts. "The dedicated Christian pursuing a career in the arts or media is caught between a hammer and an anvil. The hammer is that of closed-minded secularism and the anvil that of closed-minded fundamentalist Christianity. He or she has a narrow and precarious road to walk."

Too many Christians, says Schaeffer, don't know the difference between art and propaganda. "There are too few people in the church encouraging this generation of Christians to succeed in the arts. There are, however, many Christian guilt-mongers who place burdens on others that they themselves do not bear. Their 'What's-Christian-about-that?' attitude doesn't understand the daily reality of the artist's struggle." Even artists who do things that are clearly and distinctively Christian, such as the novelist Walker Percy, are frequently rejected as "unsuitable" by some Christians because their works do not toe to one or another line of orthodoxy.

Shakespeare, Michelangelo, and a host of other worthies would not pass muster with today's spiritual and political censors, according to Schaeffer. And he suggests that we've been through this before. "After the High Renaissance 17th century and the 18th-century Counter-Reformation, art in most of Europe drifted towards pompous political and religious propaganda for a time. The florid sentimentality of Bernini replaced Michelangelo's purity. The ridiculous, pretentious monstrosities of Rubens replaced the tranquil luminosity of Botticelli."

In exemplary contrast, Dutch artists such as Jan Vermeer, Jan Steen, and Rembrandt were faithful to the vocation of the Christian artist, and in today's situation we should take our cue from them. According to Schaeffer, today's situation is nothing less than dire. "We are surrounded by reactionaries. This time they come disguised as feminists, leftists, and fundamentalist Christians, but their intent to misuse the arts and humanities is the same as those of the manipulators of earlier times. The answer to those who would politicize art must be the same as that presented by the Dutch painters of the 'golden age' of Dutch art. They, through their work, produced a poignant rebuke to the idea that art was only for princes and popes or for making political or religious statements. Their everyday scenes of Dutch life were infused by the light of Christian faith. In portraying the ordinary, they reached for transcendence."

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NON-CHIC NONVIOLENCE

"What's Wrong with Operation Rescue?: Uncivil, Unloving, Unconvincing." That's the title of an article in *Commonweal* by Charles DiSalvo, a law professor. It drew a number of spirited responses, including the following by Juli Loesch Wiley, longtime pacifist activist: "Charles DiSalvo says he has noticed harsh and accusatory words, avoidance of suffering, and general belly-aching among those who blockade abortion sites. It would be pointless to get all huffy and deny that any such less-than-noble behavior has ever been observed at anti-abortion interventions. But anyone who's been a participant, and not just a theoretician, knows that these lapses are seen—and frequently—in all nonviolent movements. My own twenty years' experience with the United Farm Workers, the no-nukes movement, and other campaigns bears this out.

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"What DiSalvo missed, however, is that people like Randy Terry, Joan Andrews, and Christy Anne Collins have called the many prolife sit-in groups around the country to a uniform code of 'peaceful, prayerful' behavior and repentant acceptance of jail time (rather than paying bail or fines) which has become common—almost standard—throughout the movement. Both in theory and in practice, Operation Rescue is worthy of the classic civil disobedience tradition.

"But DiSalvo has misunderstood something else which is so basic that it makes me think he hasn't really been paying attention. He assumes that a sit-in at an abortion site is a form of symbolic protest. It is not. The volunteer fire department doesn't come to 'protest' a fire; it comes to put it out. Operation Rescue doesn't aim to 'protest' a particular child-disposal center on a particular day; it aims to shut it down.

"It works because blockading the doors buys time for sidewalk counselors to talk to would-be clients approaching the clinic, and offer alternatives which can turn mother and child away from an abortion. I say again: it works. We have women's testimony and living children to prove it.

"That's why Operation Rescue participants, arrested for trespass, *must* offer the court a 'necessity defense.' That's why, on some (admittedly rare) occasions, district attorneys have refused to prosecute; juries have refused to convict; judges have suspended sentences. Civil law itself recognizes—or should recognize—that trespass statutes were not designed to be enforced against persons involved in saving somebody's life.

"Perhaps some people think the nonviolent tradition exists only among folks who wear Gandhi buttons on their lapels and have some history with the Left; they don't think a bunch of white-bread-eaters with Bible College bumper stickers could be 'real' *satyagrahis*. I wonder if this might be DiSalvo's problem."

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WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

"Words, words, words," began a letter from a reader complaining that this journal offers no program for action. We plead guilty.

We the more readily plead guilty because the letter arrived the day we read Václav Havel's "Words on Words," his acceptance speech upon receiving the Peace Prize of the German Booksellers Association. Havel, playwright and President of Czechoslovakia, addressed "the mysterious power of words in human history." He said this: "In the beginning was the Word; so it states on the first page of one of the most important books known to us. What is meant in that book is that the Word of God is the source of all creation. But surely the same could be said, figuratively speaking, of every human action? And indeed, words can be said to be the very source of our being, and in fact the very substance of the cosmic life-form we call Man. Spirit, the human soul, our self-awareness, our ability to generalize and think in concepts, to perceive the world as the world (and not just as our locality), and lastly, our capacity for knowing that we will die—and living in spite of that knowledge: surely all these are mediated or actually created by words?"

Words are an ambivalent and perfidious phenomenon, such as the words of Lenin that were, says Havel, "invariably frenzied." As for the words of Marx, they illuminated hidden social mechanisms, and they were also the "germ of all the subsequent appalling gulags." "And what about Freud's words?" asks Havel. "Did they disclose the secret cosmos of the human soul, or were they no more than the fountainhead of the illusion now benumbing half of America that it is possible to shed one's torments and guilt by having them interpreted away by some well-paid specialist?"

Words that bear the beauty of vision for many have a way of turning nasty. "Socialism," for instance. "There was a time . . . when, for whole generations of the downtrodden and oppressed, the word socialism was a mesmerizing synonym for a just world, a time when, for the ideal expressed in that word, people were capable of sacrificing years and years of their lives, and their very lives even. I don't know about your country, but in mine, that particular word—'socialism'—was transformed long ago into just an ordinary truncheon used by certain cynical, parvenu bureaucrats to bludgeon their liberal-minded fellow citizens from morning until night, labeling them 'enemies of socialism' and 'antisocialist forces.'"

Words don't stand still. "The selfsame word can be true at one moment and false the next, at one moment illuminating, at another, deceptive. On one occasion it can open up glorious horizons, on another, it can lay down the tracks to an entire archipelago of concentration camps. The selfsame word can at one time be the cornerstone of peace, while at another, machine-gun fire resounds in its every syllable."

Surely few words are more compelling than the word "peace." "But even that word managed at times to be well and truly ambivalent. It signified, of course, the first glimmer of hope of a Europe without cold wars or iron curtains. At the same time—unhappily—there were also occasions when it signified the abandonment of freedom: the basic precondition for all real peace."

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Responsibility for words is an intrinsically ethical task. "As such, however, it is situated beyond the horizon of the visible world, in that realm wherein dwells the Word that was in the beginning and is not the word of Man." Havel's conclusion seems inescapable: "In the beginning of everything is the word. It is a miracle to which we owe the fact that we are human. But at the same time it is a pitfall and a test, a snare and a trial. More so, perhaps, than it appears to you who have enormous freedom of speech, and might therefore assume that words are not so important. They are. They are important everywhere."

Words, words, words? You better believe it.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ We don't run a speakers bureau, but in the case of Dr. Erik Kuehnelt-Leddihn we'll act for the moment as though we do. Now in his eighties, Dr. K-L is an Austrian polymath who has been everywhere, seen everything, and known most of the worthies of this century—or so it seems. And all this he can talk about most engagingly in fourteen languages, including very elegant English. His reflections on the spiritual and political revolutions taking place in Europe may be of particular interest. He is making his annual American lecture tour this fall, and colleges and other interested institutions can contact him at A 6072 Lans/Tyrol, Austria.

■ We did not see it mentioned in the press here, but there was quite a flap in Germany when the Evangelical Church of Berlin and Brandenburg gave Erich Honecker, the aging former head of the East German regime, refuge in a church home for the aged. The home, Valley of Hope, is only a few miles from the luxurious compound at Wandlitz, where Honecker and other Communist leaders once lived. Released from prison until his trial, Honecker, long the master of a professedly atheist state, particularly requested a place in a church home. In responding to criticism of the church's action, Bishop Gottfried Forck emphasized the Christian teaching of forgiveness, which would seem to indicate that Honecker was received as a penitent.

■ The effusion of "Gorbomania" in the West over the last several years has been something to watch. It reached a peak, or one of its peaks, when *Time* named him Man of the Decade. Of the *decade*, no less, even though Gorbachev had been on the scene for no more than half of it. Now it seems obvious to us that, if one were to ask who had the greatest impact on world history in the 1980s, the answer is Pope John Paul II. Or, if the question is limited to the political world, the answer seems equally obvious: Ronald Reagan. (It is a source of continuing puzzlement that what seems so obvious to us is hidden from many of the wise of the world.) Edward E. Ericson, writing in *The Reformed Journal*, offers this conclusion: "And so reflections about *Time*'s choice of Gorbachev as the Man of the Decade bring us finally to real consequences in the real world. To see Gorbachev as *Time* does is to place ourselves on the wrong side of history. In acquiescing to the rising, and seemingly irreversible tide of liberation in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev serves a useful purpose. But ultimately he is one of the dictators against whom the peoples of Eastern Europe are rebelling. He is the wiliest of the lot, the one who first saw the handwriting on the wall. But he is still one of them."

■ The newsletter *Religion and Democracy* notes that some churches in North America have what might be described as an ambiguous attitude toward the guerrillas in El Salvador, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). On the one hand, there is a call for the end of violence. On the other, the Lutheran and Episcopal churches, plus some Roman Catholic institutions, endorsed a 1988 statement that hailed the FMLN as "a powerful, popular revolutionary movement, prepared to respond to the violence and to overcome the injustice." Some of the same voices have more recently called for cutting off U.S. aid to the elected government of Alfredo Cristiani. Protests against that government's apparent inability to protect religious workers, even if they are working in sympathy with the FMLN, are perfectly justified, says the newsletter. "Religious believers must be free to express their convictions in every area of life, including politics. They should have the legal right even to praise the terrorist FMLN, although not to assemble bombs for it. It is the business of the church—not the military—to correct the misguided political views of some church staff." The newsletter is a solid source of information on issues of religious freedom and democracy around the world, and it is available from The Institute on Religion and Democracy, 729 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

■ Proponents of liberation theology who major in bashing the American gringos are having a hard time with "Just Cause," the U.S. intervention in Panama. For instance, Phillip Berryman writes in *Commonweal*, the liberal Catholic journal, about the human costs of the U.S. action, and why it may turn out to be a failure in the long term. He does acknowledge, however, that "there is no doubt that many Panamanians embraced the U.S. troops as liberators." Many? How about 92 percent? That's what the polls indicated following the intervention. Polls do not a just cause make, but they do tell us

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something about popular consent, and it does seem churlish of those who disagree with the U.S. action not to acknowledge that.

■ For long and usually lonely years Blahoslav and Olga Hruby published *RCDA* (*Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*). All through the Cold War, their journal was one of the few reliable sources for documentation on the persecution of believers under Communist tyrannies. Initially, *RCDA* had support from some of the oldline churches, but that dried up when leaders decided that embarrassing news about Communist behavior got in the way of a "peace and justice" agenda that required cordial relations with the oppressive regimes of the East. We recently heard from Olga: "A few days ago I was at the Cathedral of St John the Divine attending a show in honor of the president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel. I could not help thinking back to the early 1970s when we were having quite a problem finding twenty signatories for a cable to then president Husak in protest against the mistreatment of Havel. *RCDA* published an essay by Havel in 1976. Now his friends are countless. Everybody loves a winner and a happy end. Except the happy end isn't here yet, particularly not so far as the churches are concerned."

■ About the best continuing moral reflection on America and world affairs is to be found in the newsletter *American Purpose*. No, take that back; it is the best, period. Written by George Weigel, *American Purpose* stays on top of the "peace, freedom, and security debate" with specific reference to the churches and opinion elites. Consider, for instance, this from the current issue: "A new literary genre is aborning, perhaps best described as 'post-cold war chic.' Its development doubtless reflects the cognitive dissonance, as the sociologists would say, of those who long denied that the Cold War had much to do with anything except Harry Truman's crusty temper. Indeed, the mental stress suffered by these poor lambs over the past six months has been such that even the reality of the Berlin Wall has to be retrospectively, er, modified. Thus David Spanier, a 'diplomatic correspondent for Independent Radio News in London,' could tell readers of the *New York Times Book Review* that 'the Berlin Wall was not about bricks and barbed wire in defense of Marxism, but about people.'" Weigel adds: "People, we had thought, doing evil things, like erecting bricks and barbed wire in defense of Marxism."

To get a sample copy of *American Purpose*, just drop a note to the Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1030 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005.

■ Michael Kinsley of *The New Republic* ponders reports that apparatchiks at the Moscow Higher Party School are now parroting Gorbachev's line, just as they parroted the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxies currently being abandoned. Washington too is "apparatchik city," he suggests, since most everybody goes along to get along. More generally, that's the way it is with human beings, he tells us. And it is especially the case with "reformed lefties" who merely wanted to cash in on what Kinsley views as the conservative ascendancy of recent years. "My point is to reserve a bit of sympathy for people whose moral universe is suddenly turned upside down," he writes. And, in the light of the revolutions of 1989, it seems he wants to be especially sympathetic to people who for years have been saying that Communism is not such a bad thing, at least not when compared with the problems of the American system. "It's easy," he observes, "to say they should have known better, acted better. It's harder to say for sure you would have known or acted better yourself." There is self-knowledge and kindness in that. But then Michael Kinsley concludes that, when other great shifts in ideas and politics occur, "most of us will flip as elegantly as those students at the Moscow Higher Party School, and hope no one notices." We noticed, and wish that Mr. Kinsley had saved his sad confession for his spiritual director.

■ Never one to shrink from duty, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., took to the *New York Times* op-ed page to caution Roman Catholic bishops on the dangers of interfering with the way that politicians (i.e., Mario Cuomo) address the abortion question. If the bishops keep it up, wrote Schlesinger, a "majority of conscientious and God-fearing Americans" will agree with the "No-Nothings" and Ku Klux Klan that the Catholic Church is trying to take over the country. Never one to resist such temptations, the newsletter, *catholic eye*, asked, "Don't knowbody no knothing knowmore?"

■ In a not so obscure journal there is this advertisement: "FOR A VEGETARIAN SEDER: Haggadah for the Liberated Lamb." You can get the text, in Hebrew and English, from an outfit called "Micah" in Marblehead, MA. One of our editors, the one with a more mischievous bent, appends this note: "So what's next? 150 hours of community service for Haman? Moses provides water wings for Pharoah's army? Conflict resolution seminars for David and Goliath? Oy, vey!"

Sources: On the PRC, *New York Times*, February 25, 1990, and ELCA news release, February 13, 1990. Goodman on Rooney, February 13, 1990. On Spong, *New York Times*, February 12, 1990. *Initiatives* on Catholicism, February 1990. On Cuomo's challenge, *America*, February 17, 1990; Cuomo quoted, *New York Times*, February 12, 1990. Sarna on Jews, *Journal of Reformed Judaism*, Winter 1990. Schaeffer on art, *Publishers Weekly*, March 2, 1990. Wiley on DiSalvo, *Commonweal*, February 23, 1990. Havel on words, *New York Review of Books*, January 18, 1990. On Honecker, Lutheran World Information, May 1990. Ericson on Gorbachev, February 1990. On the El Salvador guerillas, March 1990. Berryman on "Just Cause," February 23, 1990. Kinsley on those changes, March 5, 1990. *catholic eye* on noing or knowing, February 20, 1990.

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SPIDER

Z—the fly is at the sill.
Z Z—I am silent, riding the center
Of my web, the intricacy of my thought
Spelled out like the stars and the bonds between them.
Z Z Z
My feet make no noise as I dance to the edge

Of my galaxy, this gossamer star-net that catches
The sun filtering gray through the window.
Here at the edge of the void through which
I extend myself, I listen to the fat
Stumbler, him of the single idea
That the glass will suddenly dissolve, the one

Who crawls upward on gluey feet and beats
Stubby wings until he plummets, his eyes
Rotating, twin red turrets. He tries
And sputters, tries and falls again. Satisfied,
I return to the tensile center, all my wits
Sharpened to wait. For have I not written

Out my thoughts to the gods?—I who fell
From heaven on a single strand,
Unraveling my guts, and found this eminence
To attach to, and then that, and then that
In the void, in the whispering chaos
And, groundless, swung myself through the night,

Launched out on the rope of myself to meet
The other like an echo of myself,
Trailing the strong cord of my being
In parallel hexagonals until
The pattern of my soul was laid out. Then
The great square of day shone dim as the white

Eye of the sun climbed up and I saw
The beautiful design
Of myself flex silver in all directions.
The small gnats fly to it in admiration
And sing, fascinated, as I weave them into it
And drink their song, my hunger slightly abated.

Now I await this black-booted fellow,
This drab swashbuckler thick with the dust
Of his fellows who failed before him,
This worn-out singer of song who turns
One eye backward in fear, one forward in desire,
Who thinks there is a world outside the glass

Of color and open spaces, tired of
My twilit world where things silver with thought
And grow dry. Let him bluster and crawl.
Soon now, in his last careering search
For a way out of the dark he'll find my net,
A shimmer of moonlight sticking to his wings,

A deadly, impossible music that catches
Him in mid-air, a symphony that wraps
Him round though he saw at it frantically
With his violin until it silence him—
Until he hangs, a note like the others
In this universal score I have composed,

My choral symphony, to which I've offered up
His small soul in gratitude, that it might swell
Larger, expanding into this darkness—
Until he hangs, a shell as weightless
As if he'd gone through the glass, transfigured
Into the endless contemplation of my being.

Into my very self, another burned-out satellite,
A dead star. Meanwhile I sit
All night at the center,
Filled with a sweet surfeit of being,
My feet sensitive to each wave and vibration
Along its radii, listening for news
Of life at the far-flung edges.

Robert Siegel

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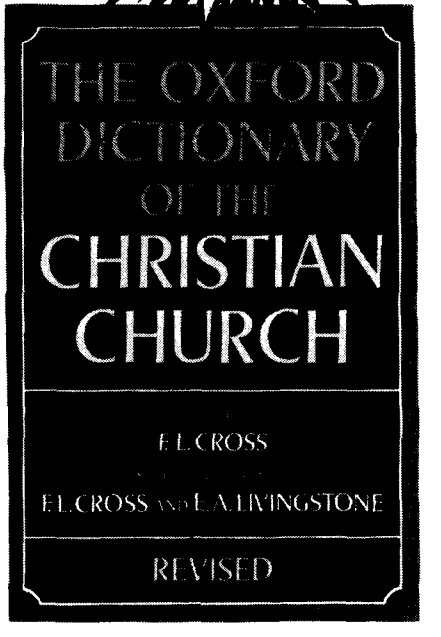

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